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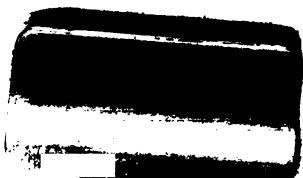
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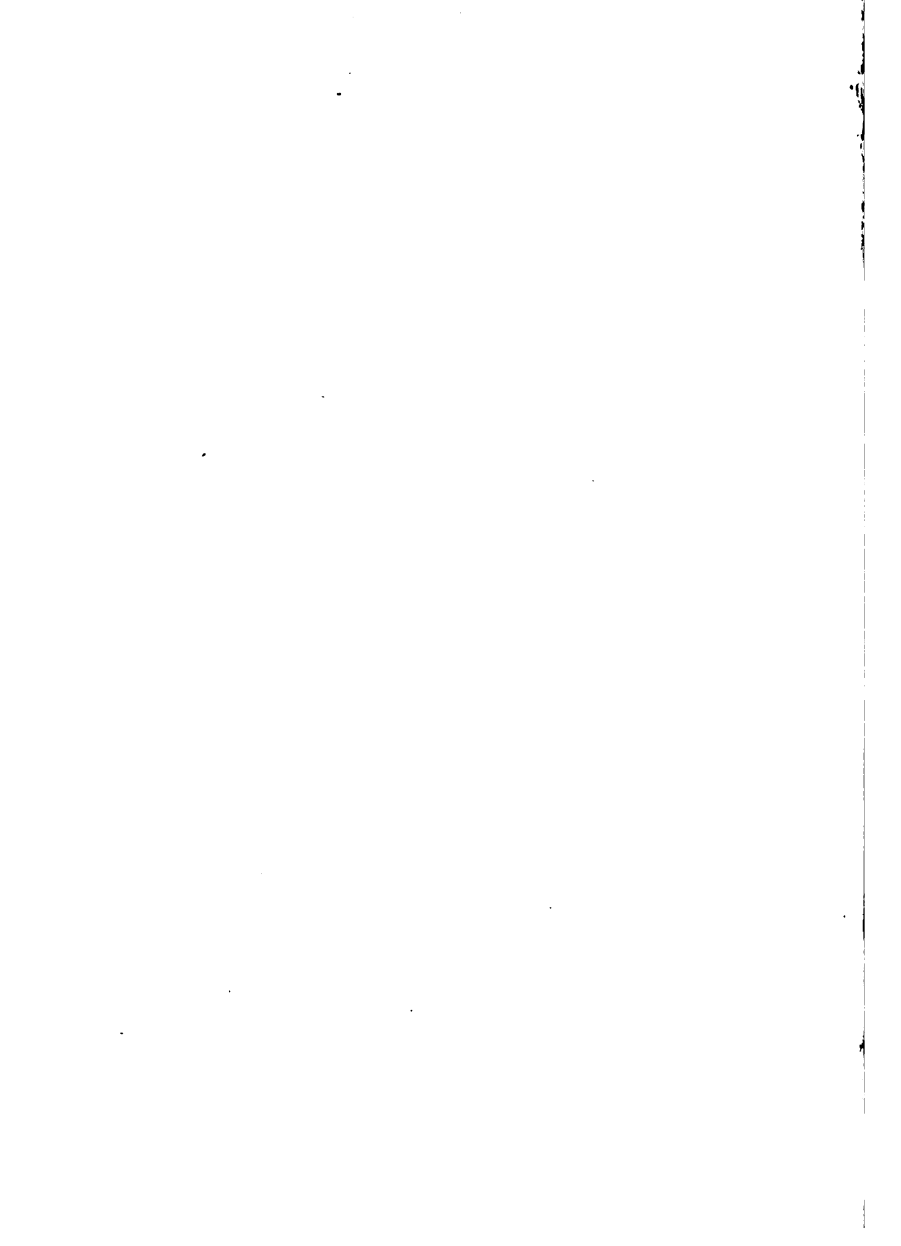
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LABOR IN POLITICS

BY

ROBERT HUNTER

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"Socialists at Work,"

"Violence and the Labor Movement," etc.

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INTRODUCTORY

The last great constructive social legislation in America was a victory for Labor in politics. Over eighty years ago, through the political efforts of some humble mechanics and laborers, the common schools of our country were established. They are generally believed to have been the result of the humanitarian efforts of Horace Mann and his group of enthusiastic friends, and, while undoubtedly they did much to develop and improve our public schools, no one should be allowed to remain ignorant of the fact that it was a workingmen's political party that demanded and obtained our system of "free and universal education."

Previous to 1830 the children of the working classes were educated either at home or in charity schools. These latter were mostly endowed, or, at any rate, supported by wealthy friends. They were frequently spoken of as pauper schools, and the children who attended them were usually dressed by charity, in clothes of the same color and cut. They were marched back and forth along the streets in the garb of paupers and proudly exhibited as the wards of the Carnegies of that time. The self-respecting mechanic usually declined to send his children to these schools, and, when he could not afford a private instructor, they had either to be taught at home or to grow up in ignorance. At best, these pauper schools could only furnish instruction to a small proportion of children, and the vast majority went without the opportunity to learn. It is not strange, therefore, in 1828, when the workingmen of Pennsylvania, New York, and several New England states established a political party of their own, that the first fundamental reform advocated

by them was the establishment by the state of a free and universal system of education. It is hard to realize today how revolutionary such a demand appeared to the conservatives of that time, or how bitterly the idea was fought.

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Nearly all the powerful politicians, rich men, and great papers assailed this program of the workingmen. They reproached it as being tainted with Communism and Socialism. They declared that if poor children were educated they would refuse to do honest work. They protested against the establishment of schools by the state, because the taxes would fall on the rich, and this would mean confiscating the wealth of the rich for the benefit of the poor. They were enraged that any group of men should have the audacity to suggest any such deliberate and cold-blooded scheme for confiscating private property. Furthermore, they declared that if the children of the poor were educated at the state's expense, the fathers would become loafers and drunkards. Free education, it was said, would take from them all incentive to labor, because unless a mechanic felt the necessity of earning enough money properly to bring up and educate his children, he would cease to work. The direst consequences were prophesied for this new policy, and even "free love" was said to be an inevitable outcome of free education. There is not one argument made today against national or municipal ownership of monopoly, or, indeed, against Socialism, that was not made against the proposition to establish state ownership and operation of schools.*

Fortunately, these criticisms did not deter the workingmen, and we find in the early thirties an immense agita-

*Cf. Commons and Sumner, Documentary History of American Industrial Society, Vol. V, pp. 94-123. (The Arthur H. Clark Co., Cleveland, 1910.)

tion being conducted by the labor bodies in favor of public schools. By withdrawing entirely from the then existing parties, by uniting their forces, and by sending their own men into the legislatures, the workers forced the other parties to take up the program of the labor party, and within half a dozen years the foundations of our public school system were laid. Let everyone, therefore, who is thankful today for our really magnificent system of public education, give credit to the laborers of the thirties for this achievement. They were assailed by all the powerful of the time as agents of riot and disorder, of free love and confiscation, of madness and ultimate ruin. And while it may be well to draw a veil over their "patriotic" assailants, we should never cease to remember our heavy debt to the illiterate workers who conceived the most beneficent and constructive social legislation of the nineteenth century and the most invaluable and indispensable social institution of modern society. The school erected in every district of every city, town, and hamlet in this country is a monument to the political power of Labor, exercised too briefly but with such incredible results, by a few laborers who lived and fought over eighty years ago in this land of ours. It is the first and last great achievement of Labor in American politics.

This little volume is an attempt to find out why it is that Labor has stood for three-quarters of a century, and stands even to this day, helpless to improve, through legislation, its conditions in the shop and in the home. It is an attempt to find out why Labor has been so ineffective in politics as to permit the United States to become the most backward of all the great industrial nations in laws protecting the life, limb, and health of the worker; in social legislation for the benefit of all the people; in civic purity and improvement; in the ownership of public utilities, and

in the building up of the commonwealth. The brutality of our industrial lords; the unconcern, if not helplessness of our Government; and the powerlessness of the people to remedy their ills, to protect their rights, or to curb the arrogance of our plutocrats are proving to Europe that our democracy is a failure. "Our monarchy is better than your anarchy," they say; "and our responsible aristocracy is better than your irresponsible plutocracy." However that may be, this great and rich nation of ours is becoming notorious among the nations of the world for its failure to give its people relief from extortionate monopolies or its workers proper legal protection, insurance against illness, accident, and old age, or even the most necessary sanitation and safety in the workshop and in the home.

That the United States should have strikingly failed in these matters, in the very period when all other nations are making immense progress along these lines, should concern every sincerely democratic mind. No doubt it does, and there seem to be a few among the great capitalists who fear that American industry may be unwise in exploiting too brutally the working class. At all events, in recent years the National Civic Federation has sent several commissions to the various countries of Europe to study their advanced labor legislation, their insurance laws, and their workmen's compensation acts. The National Association of Manufacturers, the Russell Sage Foundation, and other organizations have also sent agents abroad on similar quests. Besides, hundreds of public-spirited citizens have reported, after visiting Europe, that we are woefully and shamefully behind the foreign countries in social legislation, labor laws, and civic improvement. This is the testimony one often hears from the well-to-do, and similar views are expressed by all Socialists and many prominent Trade Unionists who

have visited Europe. Mr. Samuel Gompers, who used to say on all occasions that the American Federation was leading the labor movement of the world, was astonished, upon spending a few months abroad in 1909, to see the immense improvement in the condition of the people that had occurred since his previous visit. Upon his return he warned the working classes here that they were losing ground.

"We are, in the United States," he said recently, "not less than two decades behind many of the European countries in the protection of the life, health and limb of the workers."*

How great the progress has been in Europe is indicated by the fears of some of our great capitalists who spend months across the water every year. They speak with alarm of the radical reforms, humanitarian legislation, and "Socialistic enterprises" that have recently engaged the attention of European governments. A few of them have even ventured to warn their royal hosts that the governments are being pushed too far; that some check must be put upon the power of the people; and that financial and social ruin will result from the "experiments in Socialism" now being made in the countries of Europe. Only a few months ago Mr. Lloyd-George severely rebuked Mr. James J. Hill for some such gratuitous interference in English politics. However, the governments would gladly enough follow the advice of Mr. Hill if they could; but, unhappily for them, a force is rising in Europe whose hunger cannot be appeased and whose power cannot be withstood. Nevertheless, the Jeremiads of our plutocrats have not been altogether without effect, and some good old Tories are now beseeching their countrymen to overthrow the British Constitution and

*Charges against House Members and Lobby Activities of the National Association of Manufacturers and Others, Washington, 1913, p. 2532.

to adopt one on the very excellent lines of our own.

All this has been discussed with proper discretion in our papers and magazines. But little has been said of the efforts of Germany and other countries to induce the United States to be more humane to its working class. Several times recently the governments of Europe have had to appeal to our government to protect the lives and health of citizens of their countries now working here; while the consuls of European governments have had to protest against the murder of fellow-citizens at work here by the privately hired thugs of some employers. Furthermore, the German government heavily subsidizes the International Association for the Advancement of Labor Legislation, for the purpose of trying to induce the United States and other nations to care for their workers as Germany has been forced to care for hers. It is not that Germany is primarily interested in the workers of this country, but (with the conditions of her own workers vastly improved, as a result of the pressure of the Socialists) she is fearful lest her manufacturers may not always be able to compete with those of America. Shorter hours, higher wages, better sanitary conditions, insurance laws, safety appliances in mines and factories, pensions for the aged, great areas of slums destroyed, and vast new districts of improved housing, increase the cost of manufacture. Consequently, Germany and other nations now claim that they cannot go on with much-needed reforms unless the United States is forced to keep pace with them. It appears, then, that we are not only falling behind, but that we are also keeping other nations back.

Unhappily, there seems as yet to be no organized force in America which can compel our governments to protect the life, limb, and health of the worker, to insure to every

citizen his constitutional rights, or to devise constructive social legislation for the benefit of all classes of the population. We seem to be more or less the victims of a small oligarchy which rules industrially, financially, and politically the life of the nation. The only two organized forces in America which contend against the growing tyranny of wealth are the Socialists and Trade Unionists. Both are as yet ineffective. Despite tremendous agitation and over twenty years of unbelievable sacrifice, the Socialists are as yet without power to force through our legislatures even the most necessary political and social reforms. Although polling nearly a million votes, they have been able to keep but one man in Congress. On the other hand, the Trade Unionists are fighting for their lives. They face certain almost overwhelming obstacles. Although their demands are more moderate than those of any other workers in any great industrial nation, their unions are fought with incredible bitterness. They are, in fact, illegal organizations. They are blocked by trust laws,—as laughable as that may be. They are crippled by injunctions. Their funds are tied up in court. Their pickets are arrested, and they are denied the use even of the boycott. Despite the most respectful and often pathetic pleadings for laws protecting the working class, the Trade Unionists have made little or no impression upon the political machines that dominate our government. When labor laws are passed, they are frequently fraudulent, and the useful ones are so rarely enforced that many strikes have had to be called in recent years for the purpose of getting them enforced. Even when engaged in this apparently laudable task of aiding the State to force capitalists to obey the law, the militia has been used to defeat the strikers. In this country, as in no other except Russia, Trade Unionists are denied the rights of free speech and of peaceable as-

sembly, while the judges, by injunctions and other ruses, deny them trial by jury. In recent years thousands of strikers have been thrown into jail with no charge against them and kept there for months without explanation or trial. Even the *habeas corpus* has been denied to striking Trade Unionists. Not only, then, do we fail to make progress, but we are actually losing some of the liberties that have long been thought to be inviolable in this country.

There must be some explanation for this growing Russianization of America. There must be excellent reasons why we are failing politically not only to improve the conditions of the people, but are actually losing some of the liberties that our fathers won. In all other industrial countries we are witnessing an immense and rapid growth in the power of democracy. Nearly everywhere else there are great popular organizations of the people which are making themselves felt in the life of the nation. In all other advanced countries Labor is a mighty political force. It has its co-operatives, its trade unions, its press, and its parties. Socialists and Trade Unionists are united, and together they are devising and forcing through the legislatures of their various countries great schemes of constructive social legislation that are vastly improving the life of all the people. But while great victories are being won in Europe by Labor in Politics, we are either standing still or losing ground.

In order to throw some light upon the causes of the political helplessness of Labor in America, I have endeavored to examine critically the political methods of Labor in this country and to contrast them with the powerful and effective methods of Labor in Europe. I have done this in the hope that such a study may help the workers here to devise ways and means of making themselves felt in the political life of our nation, and hasten the development here

of a powerful democratic movement, which will not only force such legislation as has been achieved by the workers abroad, but will go beyond even that in the interest of the people. I am speaking here particularly to workingmen, because they are the hope of the nation. Their numbers are overwhelming; but unless they move intelligently and effectively, there is no hope whatever for democracy in this country. If there is no strength and unity in the people, if their means and methods of action are ineffective, and if what they attempt to do can invariably be blocked by the powerful interests of wealth and privilege, then there is left only despair for those of us who believe in democracy and that through it alone shall we be able to achieve a better, happier, and more beautiful world. This little volume, then, is an attempt to discover what is keeping Labor back, and, in the light of the experience of the labor movement abroad, which has been so successful, to find ways and means here of arousing and organizing the now latent power of the people.

CHAPTER I.

THE POLITICS OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR.

There is a myth much uttered and widely believed that the American Federation of Labor was in its early days opposed to any form of political activity. That body is said to have formulated this motto: "No politics in the unions." The fiction is so current and so seldom disputed that it hardly occurs to anybody to investigate its truth. But if one will look into the proceedings of the first convention of what is now called the American Federation of Labor, he will discover that from the birth of that organization an immense amount of its time and energy has been absorbed in politics. At its first meeting, in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, in 1881, it gave as one of its four chief objects:

"To secure legislation favorable to the interests of the industrial classes."*

At the same time it elected a legislative committee of five delegates, whose duty it was to "watch legislative measures directly affecting the question of labor; to initiate, whenever necessary, such legislative action as the Congress may direct, or as the exigencies of the time and circumstances may demand."†

Thus, it was determined at the start to maintain a permanent labor lobby in Washington and in the state legislatures.

The lobbies were, of course, to carry out the political objects of the Federation, and, to make these perfectly clear,

*Report of the Federation of Organized Trades & Labor Unions of the U. S. and Canada, 1881, p. 4.

†Report of 1881 Convention, p. 10.

a political platform was adopted which contained the following thirteen legislative demands:

1. The passage of laws by Congress and the state legislatures for the incorporation of labor unions.
2. Compulsory education.
3. Prohibition of employment of children under fourteen.
4. Uniform apprentice laws, providing for an apprenticeship of from three to five years and for the furnishing by the employer of proper facilities for the acquirement of the trade.
5. The enforcement of the United States eight-hour law in the spirit of its designers.
6. Abolition of the contract system in prison labor, "so as to discontinue the manufacture of all articles which will compete with those of the honest mechanic or workingman."
7. Laws imposing fine and imprisonment upon employers who maintain the truck or store-order system.
8. Laws to insure workmen the first lien upon the products of their labor in all cases.
9. "The repeal and erasure from the statute books of all acts known as conspiracy laws, as applied to organizations of labor in the regulation of wages and the number of hours which shall constitute a day's work."
10. The establishment of a national bureau of labor statistics and the appointment of a proper person, identified with the laboring classes, to the management of it.
11. The adoption of such laws by Congress "as shall give to every American industry full protection from the cheap labor of foreign countries."
12. The prohibition by Congress of the importation of foreign laborers under contract.
13. "We recommend all trades and labor organizations to secure proper representation in all law-making bodies by means of the ballot, and to use all honorable measures by which this result can be accomplished."*

To the above platform there were added from time to time supplementary demands, which were also political in their nature. At the same session resolutions were passed demanding the prohibition of Chinese immigration; state laws for licensing stationary engineers; laws for the inspection and ventilation of mines, factories, and workshops;

*See Report of 1881 Convention, pp. 3-4.

X laws providing for the sanitary supervision of all food and dwellings; and stricter laws fixing the liability of employers for accidents resulting from their negligence or incompetency. The remarkable thing about these demands is that they are so moderate. They ask nothing unreasonable. They seek no far-reaching changes in our political, social, or economic institutions. They are not revolutionary; they are simply a series of practical reforms urged by organized labor for its own immediate relief and for the benefit of the working class in general. Perhaps the most notable demand was for the abolition of the conspiracy laws, which appear to have been as offensive to the Trade Unionists of 1881 as they are today after the passage of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. However, these demands all require for their achievement some form of political action, and it is clear enough that the new labor organization was disposed from the beginning to emphasize the immense value to the then scattered trade unions of a federal body that could present to the various legislatures of the country the united demands of Labor.

X To be sure, the Federation had other than political objects. Its chief aims were to promote the trade-union movement and to bring into harmonious relations the many craft unions scattered throughout the country. This was, perhaps, the special province of the Federation, but, at the same time, its officers evidently believed that the chief value of such a federal union would come from the pressure such an organization could exercise upon the political powers in the country. The Federation, it is true, did not set out to be a political party or to affiliate itself with any political party. It did not seek to organize political societies. So far as organization among the workers was concerned, the Federation limited that within strictly trade-union lines.

Nevertheless, it did adopt a political platform; it did establish its legislative committees; and it did urge the various affiliated trade unions to seek direct representation in all law-making bodies. It was also decided that the federal movement should always be strictly non-partisan, and one of the last acts of the first session of the Federation was to resolve that members of the legislative committees should be debarred from

"publicly advocating the claims of any of the political parties."*

During the first year, the chief activities of the officials seem to have been of a legislative character. Unfortunately, lack of funds prevented any extensive work in this direction, but it appears from the report of the legislative committee to the convention of 1882 that the labor lobby had boldly approached the Speaker of the House of Representatives in Washington for the purpose of having him appoint to the Committee on Labor and Education men who had the confidence of the labor movement. Indeed, the names of ten or more Congressmen were presented to the Speaker with the urgent request that they be appointed by him to serve on that committee. The report also states that Mr. Gompers had gone to Albany in support of certain bills, and that several important labor measures had been passed by the various state legislatures as a result of the activity of the trade unions. Moreover, the legislative committee reported itself well pleased with the fact that several labor men had

"been elevated * * * to positions which give them a voice in the enactment of the laws which govern us, and, what is more gratifying, several office-holders notoriously hostile to our cause have been defeated by the united efforts of trade unionists."†

*Report, p. 24.

†Report of 1882 Convention, p. 11.

In 1883 the Federation held its annual congress in New York City. The report of the legislative committee again occupied the chief attention of the convention, and it appears that not a little had been accomplished in the year that had just passed. In fact, so many kindnesses had been shown the officers of the new movement that it was thought advisable to thank by name several politicians in Washington and in the various state legislatures for their energetic work in behalf of the trade unions.

"We recognize," runs one resolution, "in Senators Voorhees and Conger true and tried friends in the cause of labor, and as such we recommend them to our fellow-workingmen."*

The same day that the above resolution was passed another came up for discussion, which foreshadowed a future policy of the Federation. It was proposed

X / "that a committee be appointed to attend the next National conventions of the two great political parties, and in the name of the organized workmen of the United States"†

to demand pledges for the passage of certain laws in the interest of Labor. Although the Federation decided, because of lack of funds, not to send a committee, letters were written to the two political parties, formulating the legislative demands of the labor movement. In 1884 the convention deemed it the

X "imperative duty of every trade unionist and wage worker in North America to work and vote for candidates for legislative honors who have proved themselves true friends to the cause of organized labor."‡

These are, in brief, the outlines of the political methods of the Federation. It is clear that this new movement fully appreciated the necessity of political activity. Far from

*Report of 1883 Convention, p. 12.

†*Idem*, p. 10.

‡Report, pp. 17-18.

there being "no politics in the unions," it was boldly decided from the first to immerse the labor movement in that whirlpool. In the declarations above mentioned, we find the germs of the future political activity of the American Federation of Labor. Its methods were fully matured in the first four years of that organization, and for thirty years they have been pursued with no important additions or variations.

Although these methods were adopted by the Federation almost without opposition, there were in all the early conventions a few individuals who believed that they would accomplish little of value to Labor. The methods were largely the product of the brain of Mr. Gompers, who became almost immediately a dominant figure in the affairs of the new organization. He was a cigarmaker by trade and a very effective speaker and organizer for the trade unions. In the early days he gave the major portion of his time to building up the new movement, although in that period the organization was too poor to pay for such services. He was an earnest student of political and economic questions, and he himself says that he undertook to learn the German language for the purpose of reading *Das Kapital* of Karl Marx. In those days he was often looked upon as sympathetic to Socialism, and at the first session of the Federation he was accused of being a Socialist. One of the Pittsburgh papers spoke of him as "one of the smartest men" present, whose intention it was to capture the organization "as the representative of the Socialists."* Mr. Gompers instantly refuted this rumor and even referred to it as a slander. It was certainly far from the truth, and unhappily from the very birth of the Federation Mr. Gompers and the Socialists

*Report of 1881 Convention, p. 10.

have been at war with each other. Whether or not the antagonism was chiefly personal is after all of little importance, as there was sufficient ground for all the opposition, which later developed, in the difference between the political policies ~~proposed by the Socialists~~ and those adopted by the Federation through the influence of Mr. Gompers.

The Socialists sought from the very beginning to persuade the Federation to sever all connections with the two great political parties and to declare for the formation of a strictly workingmen's party. The proposals of the Socialists came up in definite form in a resolution presented in 1885 by Delegates Emrich and Bauer. They declared that experience had taught the workingmen that laws in favor of the working class could not be expected from the capitalist parties, and they asserted that it would never be possible to elect real representatives of Labor's interests until workingmen severed their connections with the existing political parties and created a party of their own to carry out all of their demands. They proposed, therefore, that the platform of the Federation should be amended as follows:

"We recommend all trades and labor organizations to secure proper representation in all legislative bodies" and to elect public officers "who are willing to enforce all laws made for the interest of the working people. . . ."*

In their opinion, this could be done only

"by forming a strict workingmen's party, and electing only such candidates who are identified with the labor movement and not affiliated with the capitalistic parties."†

It will be seen that this resolution contains not only an attack on the policies already adopted by the organization but that it suggests a plan of action which Mr. Gompers considered most impractical. It is not strange, then, that

*Report of 1885 Convention, p. 18.

†*Idem*, p. 18.

after the committee on resolutions had reported unfavorably on the proposition, the first important Socialist resolution introduced in the Federation of Labor was defeated.

In 1886 the convention of the Federation was held at Columbus, Ohio, and the Socialist Trade Unionists again sought to induce that body to enter into strictly independent labor politics. This time the matter was approached in a somewhat different manner, and the Federation was requested to support the electoral activities which were already developing among the workingmen of several cities and states. In that year there was organized in Wisconsin a Union Labor Party, in which members of the Knights of Labor and the Greenback Party, as well as many Socialists, were joined. In Milwaukee alone it polled over twelve thousand votes and elected its candidates for Congress and the state legislature. A similar party was launched in Chicago by the Central Labor Union, composed of members of the American Federation of Labor and of the Knights of Labor, as well as Socialists. It cast over 20,000 votes for its county ticket, and in the following Spring over 28,000 votes for its candidate for mayor. In Maine, New Hampshire, Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, Maryland, Ohio, Minnesota, Michigan, Iowa, Missouri, and Colorado similar parties were organized, and it really seemed as if all the various radical elements,—Trade Unionists, Greenbackers, Socialists, and others,—were to be combined into a great national labor party.

As a result of the situation then existing throughout the country, it was thought that the Federation could not refuse to endorse the new movement. The following resolution was, therefore, proposed:

"WHEREAS, This subject is one which has, in the past, been a prolific source of dissension and trouble in the ranks of the work-

ingmen; but, happily, the revolution recently witnessed in the election contest in several states, notably, the remarkable and extraordinary demonstration made by the workingmen of New York, Milwaukee, Chicago, and other places, shows us the time has now arrived when the working people should decide upon the necessity of united action, as citizens at the ballot box.

"WHEREAS, The necessity of this is apparent from the subjection of the police power to the interest of corporate capital, in enforcing upon their employes conditions repulsive to free labor and liberty and if the nefarious work of the Pinkerton Detective Agency is to be stopped the workers must secure a greater share of political power; therefore, be it

"Resolved, That the Convention urge a most generous support to the independent political movement of the workingmen."*

This resolution was adopted unanimously by the convention. It could hardly have done otherwise, since, without any inspiration or support from above, masses of workmen were beginning on their own initiative to strike out into independent political activity. Their success was, as we see, quite remarkable, and, no doubt, would have continued to be remarkable had the Federation, as a whole, organically and financially supported the new movement. It appears, however, that the national officers were never very friendly to the United Labor Party. As a consequence the masses were forced to struggle on unaided by the labor movement as a whole. There is little question that a really powerful independent labor party, uniting all elements, might have been built up in that period, if it had had strong backing from the officials of the trade-union movement. Unfortunately, Mr. Gompers could not be induced to relinquish his antagonism to such independent political activities, and in that year (1886) and the next he did not hesitate to express openly his opposition. In 1888 he declared, in his annual report, that in his opinion a third party was "extremely unwise," and in 1889 a resolution was rejected by

*Report of 1886 Convention, p. 16.

the American Federation of Labor which recommended the formation of a political labor party, in which the American Federation of Labor and the Knights of Labor should be united.

By 1889 the Federation had become the most important labor body in America. It then had less than 200,000 members, but even so it was stronger than the Knights of Labor. It was, therefore, disheartening to the Socialists to have that body defeat their resolutions and refuse to assist in any manner in building up an independent labor party. It was becoming obvious that if any such work were to be done, it would have to be done without the aid of the officials of the Federation. As a result, the Socialists were making every effort to develop their own independent party. However, they realized that they could not achieve much success unless they had the aid of the great mass of Trade Unionists, and, for this reason, they carried on incessantly an active propaganda within the trade-union movement. On the whole, they were extremely successful, and by 1889 they had become a powerful factor in the labor movement. They were strong both in the Knights of Labor and in the unions affiliated with the Federation. Socialism and Trade Unionism were, in fact, then so closely related that the Socialist Labor Party was officially represented in the chief central labor body of New York City. Mr. Gompers was very much opposed to that, and, in 1890, as a result of his refusal to issue a charter to that central body, it became necessary for the American Federation of Labor to decide whether or not a political party should be represented in its convention.

Before giving the details of this episode in the history of the labor movement, it may be well to mention that the Federation was at this time emphasizing what it called "economic action." For a brief period—from 1886 to 1890

—the leading men in the Federation seemed almost to have abandoned the political policies which they had formulated earlier. In 1886 the name of the organization was changed from The Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions of the United States and Canada to The American Federation of Labor. Numerous changes were also made at this session in the constitution of the Federation. The preamble was cut down and made more moderate in tone, while the political platform was entirely eliminated. The heading, "Declaration of Principles," disappeared, and in its place, at the head of the first report of the American Federation of Labor, now stood the constitution.

Little was said in these years regarding the political methods of the older organization, although the lobby was still maintained and every effort was made by the officials to obtain better labor laws. The explanation of all this lies in the fact that the trade unions were enjoying a period of exceptional prosperity, and the time of the officials was mainly taken up in organizing trade unions and in bringing them together into the general federation. The only Trade Unionists in this period who seemed at all concerned about political activity were the Socialists, and in 1890 the Federation was called upon to decide whether or not the Socialist Labor Party was to be considered an integral part of the American labor movement. The interesting discussion which arose over this question is worth a brief review.

It appears that in 1889 there were in New York two central labor bodies; one more or less dominated by the Socialists; the other made up of unions unfriendly to the Socialists. Various efforts were made to bring these two central labor bodies together. At last a truce was agreed upon, and their charters were surrendered into the hands of President Gompers. To the united body a new charter was

given. Unfortunately, a split soon occurred, and the trade unions in sympathy with Socialism withdrew, determined to revive their old central body. President Gompers was requested to grant them a new charter, which he refused to do, so long as the New York section of the Socialist Labor Party was permitted representation in the body. The action of President Gompers started a furious discussion, and he was roundly denounced as one who was trying to drive the Socialists out of the unions. The Central Labor Federation refused to exclude the Socialist Labor Party, and the entire matter was put up for decision to the annual convention of the American Federation of Labor, which was held at Detroit in December, 1890.

Lucian Sanial, a prominent Socialist of the time, was there given the floor to state the case for his party. He held that the Socialist Labor Party was not a political party in the ordinary sense of the word. There was a great difference, he said, between its purposes and those of the great plutocratic machines. He pointed out, for instance, that the Socialist Labor Party was composed almost entirely of workingmen, and that most of its members were constantly engaged in organizing trade unions for the Federation. In his opinion, it was a *bona fide* labor organization. After a short debate the entire matter was referred to a special committee of five members, who reported the following interesting resolution:

"1st. That we recommend the cordial acceptance of the proffered fraternity of the S. L. P. as embodied in the address of Mr. Sanial. The hope and aspiration of the trade unionists is closely akin to that of the Socialist. That the burden of toil shall be made lighter, that men shall possess larger liberty, that the days to be shall be better than those that have been, may properly be the ideal of those in all movements for labor reform.

2d. We recognize, however, that men of different schools of reform thought often seek to arrive at the same end by different roads. This right of difference must be considered. This is the

logical outcome of variation in circumstances, of birth, education and temperament. We affirm the trade-union movement to be the legitimate channel through which the wage-earners of America are seeking present amelioration and future emancipation. Its methods are well-defined, its functions specialized, its work clearly mapped out.

"3d. We further hold that the trade unions of America, comprising the A. F. of L., are committed against the introduction of matters pertaining to partisan politics, to the religion of men or to their birthplace. We cannot logically admit the S. L. P. to representation, and shut the door in the face of other political organizations formed to achieve social progress. We are of opinion that a political party of whatsoever nature is not entitled to representation in the American Federation of Labor. While, therefore, deprecating the necessity which has arisen of refusing to admit those who seek our comradeship, we feel compelled to make the following recommendations:

"First—That the credentials of Lucian Sanial, from the Central Labor Federation of New York City, be returned.

"Second—That the position taken by President Gompers and the Executive Council in regard to the old charter of the C. L. F. of N. Y. be affirmed on the ground that the C. L. F. did virtually cease to exist and forfeited thereby its charter.

"Third—That the decision of President Gompers against granting a new charter to said organization be affirmed, as the decision by this body is in accord with the meaning and intent of our constitution.

"Fourth—That the delegates to this Convention, while declining to admit representatives from the S. L. P. as a political party, declare themselves tolerant of all phases of the reform movement, and would bar no delegate as an individual, because of his belief, whether radical or conservative."*

The discussion which took place over the report of the committee is interesting and instructive. Nearly every point of view was presented, but the idea that most influenced the delegates was this, that if the Socialist Labor Party were admitted, various other reform and political movements—such as the Single Tax, the Anarchist, the Greenback, the Prohibition, etc.—would likewise have a right to be admitted. Attention was called to the fact that while such Socialists as John Burns, Ben Tillett, and Tom

* Report of Proceedings, 1890 Convention, p. 20.

Mann (who were at that moment at the very height of their careers as a result of the successful issue of the great dock-strike of London) attended the trade-union congresses of Great Britain, they had never asked to be considered as the representatives of a Socialist party. They came as Trade Unionists, and it was immaterial to the British labor movement what their politics happened to be. The decision of the American Federation of Labor was that, while any delegate was free to adopt any political views and advocate any theory of economics or politics, the trade-union movement was organized for one distinct purpose, to unite men on the economic field, and that no party or sect should be allowed official representation in that organization. As was to be expected, this decision created immense bitterness among the Socialists who were excluded, and Daniel De Leon, the chief Socialist leader of that time, bitterly assailed Mr. Gompers and all those responsible for their exclusion from the trade-union movement.

It is important to keep in mind that it was not only the Socialist Labor Party that was opposed by the officials, but also any and every attempt on the part of Trade Unionists to bring into existence a party of Labor. Of course, the opposition of Mr. Gompers and his friends may have been due to the fact that it was the Socialists who urged, in season and out of season, the formation of such a party. For over forty years Socialists have urged their fellows to enter independent labor politics, and until the last few years they have always expressed a willingness to step aside, as a party, if only the Trade Unionists would themselves enter the field. The decision of 1890 was, therefore, a severe blow to the hopes of the Socialist Trade Unionists. Nevertheless they continued their efforts to alter the views of the Federation, and to this end Delegate Thomas J. Morgan

introduced an important resolution at the convention in Chicago in 1893.

This resolution first called attention to the work of the Trade Unionists of Great Britain, who had

"by the light of experience and the logic of progress, adopted the principle of independent labor politics as an auxiliary to their economic action." Such action, it was declared, had resulted "in the most gratifying successs," and it was also pointed out that the British Independent Labor Party had adopted the following program, to-wit: 1. Compulsory education; 2. Direct legislation; 3. A legal eight-hour work-day; 4. Sanitary inspection of workshop, mine and home; 5. Liability of employers for injury to health, body or life; 6. The abolition of contract system in all public work; 7. The abolition of the sweating system; 8. The municipal ownership of street cars, and gas and electric plants for public distribution of light, heat and power; 9. The nationalization of telegraphs, telephones, railroads and mines; 10. The collective ownership by the people of all means of production and distribution; and 11. The principle of referendum in all legislation. After fully stating the program, Delegate Morgan proposed that "this convention hereby indorse this political action of our British comrades," and "That this program and basis of a political labor movement be and is hereby submitted for the favorable consideration of the labor organizations of America, with the request that their delegates to the next annual convention of the American Federation of Labor be instructed on this most important subject."*

After some discussion, the resolution was adopted, although it was decided to strike out the word "favorable" and merely to submit the above program to the affiliated unions for their consideration.

While this resolution was being debated in the trade unions of the country, some very stirring events were occupying the attention of the labor world. In that year the great strike of the American Railway Union occurred. It paralyzed the industrial life of the entire middle west, and a class conflict was fought which created immense bitterness between Capital and Labor. The strike would have succeeded undoubtedly had not the government stepped in.

*Report of Proceedings of 1893 Convention, p. 37.

By the use of the militia and by the injunctions of the courts the private corporations eventually broke that great strike and destroyed the American Railway Union. Mr. Eugene V. Debs, the leader of the strike, was sent to jail, and, although not then a Socialist, it was becoming clear to him and to the laboring classes generally that the growing power of organized labor was being broken by the control which the employers exercised over political power. The same year John Burns was sent to this country by the trade unions of Great Britain as a fraternal delegate. In all his speeches, which were widely reported in the press and heard by many thousands of Trade Unionists, he pointed out in his forcible way, the necessity of fighting the battles of the working class on the political field. Partly through these events the discussion of political action became the supreme subject of the hour in labor circles.

The convention of the Federation met in 1894 in Colorado, which was then in control of the Populists. And Governor Davis H. Waite, in a letter to the convention, added some fuel to the fire by these striking words:

"The labor unions of the United States undoubtedly can learn much practical good from the experience of their brethren in Europe. I was pleased to see in the remarks of Brother Burns at the Wednesday meeting the exhortations to members of trade unions to 'get together.' It seems that in England, although in that country political means are more difficult than here, workmen or representatives of labor are elected to office, and exert great influence in the British Parliament. In the United States, political means and remedies are much more easily accessible, and legislation under greater control than in the old country, and yet the legislation of the United States in favor of labor cannot be compared with the legislation in the more advanced of other nations.

"God knows the condition of the laboring man needs amelioration, pity, charity; but the laboring men need justice more. If we are to remove evil, common sense demands that we should strike at the cause; it is useless to busy ourselves with alleviating fever and plague, and leave the foul source of disease undisturbed.

"The capitalism which controls our legislation, which dominates

our national conventions, and dictates political platforms and policies within the past few years, has almost defiantly overridden the constitutional provisions, national and state, protecting civil rights. Four years ago Benjamin Harrison, Republican president of the United States, used the military power of the United States in Wyoming to protect a band of land monopolists, who murdered two settlers upon the public lands, and the blood of those murdered men today cries from the ground in vain. The same capitalism, acting through Grover Cleveland, Democratic president, used the military power of the United States in compelling labor to perform work on railroad lines, sending the military power into Illinois, without any request of the legislature thereof or of the Governor of the state, and contrary to the Constitution of the United States. Within the last four years United States courts, overriding the Constitution of the United States, have arrested without warrant, tried without a jury and convicted without evidence, sending workmen to prison for contempt, of a so-called receiver of a railroad who is really not so much an officer of the United States as the post-master at the country cross-roads.

"A recommendation is now before Congress from the Commander-in-Chief of the United States army, General Schofield, recommending an increase of the army, its withdrawal from frontier posts and its concentration near the large cities for the purpose of overawing laboring men, putting down strikes and compelling laboring men to work on the railroad lines of capitalism. * * *

"I am aware that the present policy of the Trades Union is non-partisan, and I recognize fully your right to adopt such policy as you may approve. I would treat your action with due respect, but conceding the fact that capitalism controls our legislative bodies, that the United States Senate is simply a hospital for millionaires, that our rights are swept away, not only by Congress and Legislatures, but by the usurpation of the judiciary, there is but one remedy, and that is the 'workingmen must 'get together' politically, and support that party which in good faith declares for the rights of humanity as against the rights of property.

Yours respectfully,

"DAVIS H. WAITE."*

Nothing probably could have expressed better the feelings of workingmen in America at that time than these words of Governor Waite. The demand for independent political action was growing on all sides, and it was more or less foredoomed that the Socialists should win a victory in the convention of 1894 at Denver. As the delegates came

*Report of Proceedings 1894 Convention, pp. 35-36.

to the convention instructed to act upon the program which had been submitted to them the year before, Mr. Gompers was not insensible to the seriousness of the situation which confronted him. Although doubtless realizing that he was to meet with a temporary defeat, he did what he could to stem the tide toward independent political activity.

"He would indeed be shortsighted," declared Mr. Gompers, "who would fail to advocate independent voting and political action by union workmen. We should endeavor to do all that we possibly can to wean our fellow-workers from their affiliation with the dominant political parties, as one of the first steps necessary to insure wage-workers to vote in favor of wage-workers' interests, wage-workers' questions, and for union wage-workers as representatives.

"During the past year the trade unions in many localities plunged into the political arena by nominating their candidates for public office, and, sad as it may be to record, it is nevertheless true, that in each one of these localities politically they were defeated and the trade-union movement more or less divided and disrupted.

"What the results would be if such a movement were inaugurated under the auspices of the American Federation of Labor, involving it and all our affiliated organizations, is too portentous for contemplation. I need only refer you to the fact that the National Labor Union, the predecessor of the American Federation of Labor, entered the so-called independent political arena in 1872 and nominated its candidate for the presidency of the United States. It is equally true that the National Labor Union never held a convention after that event. The disorganized condition of labor, with its tales of misery, deprivation and demoralization, from that year until the reorganization of the workers, about 1880, must be too vivid in the minds of those who were trade unionists then and are trade unionists now to need recounting by me.

"In view of our own experience, as well as the experience of our British fellow-unionists, I submit to you whether it would be wise to steer our ship of labor safe from that channel whose waters are strewn with shattered hopes and unions destroyed."*

It is to be regretted that President Gompers did not state that the most serious industrial and financial panic that this country has ever known occurred in 1873, and it was inevitable that the trade unions should suffer through such a panic, as they have suffered through later panics,

*Proceedings 1894 Convention,, A. F. of L., p. 14.

even under the leadership of Mr. Gompers. At the very time Mr. Gompers was speaking the membership of the Federation had been cut almost in half by the panic of 1893. And similar conditions have confronted the movement as a result of every industrial depression. Certainly, in the face of such a national disaster as that of 1873, it was to be expected that such weak and feeble beginnings of a labor movement as were represented in the National Labor Union could not survive. It was not political action that demoralized and ruined that movement. It was simply the bankruptcy of our financial and industrial institutions, that not only threw millions of men out of work, but so impoverished everybody that the trade-union movement had to disappear. Whether or not the delegates realized these facts, the convention adopted the political program proposed by the Socialists and elected James McBride, of the Miners' Union, president of the American Federation of Labor. At the time, the victory seemed important enough, but it proved to be of short duration, and at the next convention Mr. Gompers was again elected president. A dispute then arose as to whether or not the tenth article of the political program had been actually adopted by the previous convention. As it declared for Socialism, it was particularly objectionable to Mr. Gompers, and now that he and his friends were again in control, they hastened to resolve that it should not stand in the political program of the Federation.

The only victory ever won by the Socialists in the American Federation of Labor was at Denver, and that, as we have seen, was a hollow one. And certain things transpired in 1896 that so seriously injured the cause of Socialism that it was for years put on the defensive. While the convention of the Federation was in session

in New York City in 1896, some members of the Socialist Labor Party organized a rival meeting in Cooper Union. Several of the Socialist delegates to the convention were invited to attend that meeting, and, to the surprise of some of them, a new trade-union organization was launched. This was the famous, or infamous, Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance. It was the outgrowth of a plan formulated by a considerable number of trade-union Socialists who felt themselves outraged by the treatment that had been meted out to them by the officials of the A. F. of L. They were thoroughly convinced that the leaders of the Federation clung to their antiquated and ineffective political methods and fought Socialism because they were in the pay of the capitalist parties. And, most unwisely, they determined to launch a rival trade-union movement that would recognize the necessity of both industrial and political activity. This was a fatal move on the part of certain leading members of the Socialist Labor Party. It did no injury to the A. F. of L., but it brought almost instant destruction to the Socialist Labor Party. Moreover, as a result of the launching of these rival organizations, trade-union Socialists everywhere were put on the defensive, and for years afterward they exercised little power in the A. F. of L. X

It was only to be expected that Mr. Gompers should make the most of this serious mistake of a few prominent Socialists, and, ever since he has repeated on every possible occasion that the only aim of the Socialists is to destroy the trade unions. Even at the convention of 1896 the folly of Mr. De Leon and his friends served well the opponents of political action. At almost the same moment when the Socialist Labor Party was

launching its rival trade-union movement, Delegate J. Mahlon Barnes introduced a resolution in that convention which declared that it is as clearly the duty of union workingmen to organize and maintain a political party devoted exclusively to their own interests as it is to organize in trade and labor unions. Most workingmen would have been willing to grant that generality. And, in fact, it was a point of view so difficult to attack that the convention avoided the entire question by adopting this substitute:

X "That party politics, whether they be Democratic, Republican, Socialistic, Populistic, Prohibition, or any other, should have no place in the conventions of the A. F. of L."*

This resolution put an end to whatever hopes the Socialists may have entertained of inducing the Federation to adopt a friendly attitude toward Socialism. The next year it appears in the constitution of the American Federation of Labor, and it stands there today. However, as we shall see later, it is a two-edged sword.

In 1901 the present Socialist Party was born. Organized, as it was, by men who had always been active in the labor unions, the new party emphasized from the first its friendliness to the trade-union movement. It condemned any interference on the part of the Socialists with the internal affairs and policies of the unions. At its first national convention it urged all wage-workers to join the existing trade unions and expressed the opinion that "neither political or other differences of opinion justify divisions of the forces of labor in the industrial movement."†

*Report of Proceedings 1895 Convention, pp. 79-80.

†Proceedings, National Convention of Socialist Party, 1904, p. 324.

It is obvious, therefore, that the new Socialist Party was determined not to make any effort to pledge the American Federation of Labor to its support. In fact, during the last twenty years no effort has been made to capture the A. F. of L. or to have it pledge itself in any manner to the support of the Socialists. This is worthy of mention, because Socialists are frequently accused of such designs. For instance, as late as March, 1914, Mr. Gompers says in the *American Federationist*:

"At nearly every convention for the past fifteen years, the Socialists * * * have for a few days in advance of the convention, and during the first few days after the opening, filled the newspaper columns with sensational declarations of their positive party control of the conventions and the defeat of the officers for reelection."*

The facts are altogether contrary. It is true that the newspapers have frequently printed such stories, because it is part of their news instinct to look for trouble, but in nearly every instance the Socialists have denied any such designs. They have, to be sure, opposed Mr. Gompers for re-election, but that is because his policies seem to them antiquated and reactionary, and because he has been a grossly unfair and often vindictive opponent of the Socialists. However, they have not sought to capture the A. F. of L. for the Socialist Party. Seventeen years ago (1898) James F. Carey, a prominent Socialist, declared:

"I do not propose to vote for the endorsement of that party;"†

While eight years later Victor L. Berger declared:

"I am known to be a Socialist, but under no circumstances would I ask for an endorsement of the Socialist Party by this convention."‡

Berger and Carey have been for years two of the

*Vol. XXI, p. 210.

†Proceedings of 1898 Convention, A. F. of L., p. 116.

‡Proceedings of 1906 Convention, A. F. of L., p. 186.

most authoritative spokesmen of the Socialist Party, and their position in this matter has been the avowed position of the Party. Not for twenty years or more have Socialist Trade Unionists attempted to gain "party control" of, or to pass partisan resolutions in, the A. F. of L.

To be sure, the Socialists have tried to bring into harmony the principles of the A. F. of L. and of the Socialist Party, but they have sought that in the interest of the entire labor movement, and in the endeavor to prevent two great organized bodies of workingmen from fighting each other. They have made every effort in the past, and will make every effort in the future, to establish sympathetic co-operation in the economic and political struggles of the working class. As a result, some great debates have occurred between the Socialists and their opponents. Victor L. Berger, James F. Carey, J. Mahlon Barnes, Max S. Hayes, John Walker, Duncan McDonald, Frank J. Hayes, and many other brilliant and able Socialist Trade Unionists have in recent years fought valiantly in support of independent political action. At the New Orleans convention in 1902 they came within a few votes of passing what is so frequently denounced as a "Socialist" resolution. Offered by Max S. Hayes and amended by William B. Wilson (now member of President Wilson's Cabinet, but then one of the leading officials of the United Mine Workers of America), the resolution reads:

"That the twenty-second annual convention of the American Federation of Labor advise the working people to organize their economic and political power to secure for labor the full equivalent of its toil."*

This "wicked" declaration came within a few votes of

*Report of Proceedings, 1902 Convention, p. 179.

being passed, but Mr. Gompers stood as a Gibraltar against it. And although pretty much the same battle has taken place at every convention, the Socialist Trade Unionists have been invariably defeated.

It is pretty difficult to say what effect, if any, the criticism of the Socialists has had upon Mr. Gompers' political ideas. They have ridiculed mercilessly his vain attempts to secure at Washington legislation favorable to labor.

"He has worn out his knee-pads in begging Congress to do justice to his fellow workers,"*

they declared; and they have contrasted with the political failures of the American Federation of Labor the political successes of the Socialists in Europe. Again and again it has been pointed out that the labor lobby has been in Washington for many weary years without anything of consequence to show for the money, time and effort spent. At last even Mr. Gompers had to admit that the labor lobby was a failure and that, despite tremendous efforts, it was rarely able to get any labor measure out of the committees. It was little more than a funeral brigade, that attended the death of nearly all of its cherished measures in behalf of Labor. The political machines were blocking the whole game of the labor movement, and it was disheartening to find that pleading and persuasion made no impression whatever upon the political bosses. By 1906 nearly all the labor men, including Mr. Gompers, had become convinced that the labor lobbies must be supplemented by some other form of political activity. There was still no disposition on the part of the leaders to form a labor party, but something must be done. It was perfectly obvious to all that the

*Charges against Members of the House and Lobby Activities of the N. A. M.; Hearings before the House Committee, p. 2533.

American labor movement was falling far behind the labor movement of other countries. '

In Europe by 1906, the labor parties had become very powerful. They were polling at that time approximately seven million votes, and they had hundreds of representatives in the European parliaments. Germany, with over three million votes, and Austria and France, each with approximately one million votes, stood at the head of the list. Although the British workers were the last to enter independent labor politics, when they once determined to do so, their success was immediate, and in that year 29 labor men were elected to the British House of Commons. The fact that in these apparently less democratic countries hundreds of actual workingmen, from the mills, mines, fields and factories, were going into the great parliaments of their different nations, there to fight the battle of labor, was helping to arouse the American labor movement from its lethargy. Constantly, news was coming from abroad of vast legislative projects being undertaken and executed as a result of the pressure of the labor and Socialist parties of Europe. Everywhere else in the world Labor was making itself felt, and really stupendous changes were resulting from the political efforts of the working class. Naturally the Socialist Trade Unionists made as much as possible out of these victories, and that especially seemed to offend Mr. Gompers, perhaps, because they were making it impossible for him longer to maintain that the labor movement which had grown up under his guidance was leading the world. In any case, it was becoming more and more obvious to him and to other leaders of the American Federation of Labor that something really big must be done, and they began in that year to devise ways and means.

On March 24, 1906, the Executive Council of the

American Federation of Labor and the presidents or other representatives of one hundred and eighteen national and international unions met in Washington and formulated what they called "Labor's Bill of Grievances." These duly authorized representatives of the labor movement of America then formally presented the document to President Roosevelt, to the president of the United States Senate, and to the speaker of the House of Representatives. Claiming to represent two million workingmen directly and more than ten million indirectly, these trade-union officials recited the wrongs of Labor and urged, in stirring words, the need for remedial legislation. After the "Bill of Grievances" came the plea:

"We present these grievances to your attention because we have long, patiently, and in vain waited for redress. There is not any matter of which we have complained but for which we have in an honorable and lawful manner submitted remedies. The remedies for these grievances proposed by Labor are in line with fundamental law, and with the progress and development made necessary by changed industrial conditions. Labor brings these—its grievances—to your attention because you are the representatives responsible for legislation and for failure of legislation. The toilers come to you as your fellow-citizens who, by reason of their position in life, have not only with all other citizens an equal interest in our country, but the further interest of being the burden-bearers, the wage-earners of America. As Labor's representatives we ask you to redress these grievances, for it is in your power so to do. Labor now appeals to you, and we trust that it may not be in vain. But if perchance you may not heed us, we shall appeal to the conscience and the support of our fellow-citizens."*

This appeal made by Labor was not heeded, and Congress adjourned without making the slightest concession to the Trade Unionists.

"Those in charge of our congressional affairs," declared Mr. Gompers later, "disclosed clearly what had been long realized, that the gentlemen misrepresenting the people attempt to substitute adroitness for patriotism; trickery, shiftiness and special pleadings for constructive statesmanship; that their course outrages the life,

*Report of Proceedings 1906 Convention, p. 32.

the interests and the welfare of the people. True to our declaration, Labor appealed not only to the working people, but to all the American people, that this republic of ours shall continue to be of, for, and by the people, rather than of, for, and by the almighty dollar.”*

The plan of a vigorous political campaign was then formulated, and the watchword adopted:

“We will stand by our friends and administer a stinging rebuke to men or parties who are either indifferent, negligent or hostile; and, wherever opportunity affords, secure the election of intelligent, honest, earnest trade unionists, with unblemished, paid-up union cards in their possession.”†

A copy of the “Bill of Grievances” was sent to each member of Congress in the fall of that year with the request that he communicate to the American Federation of Labor his position upon various labor measures. The record of votes of each member of Congress was then compiled from Labor’s point of view and made public. Efforts were made to give the widest publicity throughout the country to the merits or demerits of Congressmen. At the same time, and in pursuance of Labor’s plan of campaign, Mr. Gompers and a number of other labor men went into the Second Congressional district of Maine to defeat Mr. Charles E. Littlefield, one of the most conspicuous and bitter enemies of the labor movement. That field was chosen because the Maine elections occur before those in the other states, and because in the opinion of Mr. Gompers, the defeat of Mr. Littlefield might have a psychological effect upon the other elections. It was perhaps as interesting a battle as has occurred in politics. On the one side were arrayed some of the ablest and most efficient organizers and officials of the labor movement, while on the other side, in support of Mr. Littlefield, were manufacturers, Uncle Joe Cannon,

*Report of Proceedings 1906 Convention, pp. 32-33.

†*Idem*, p. 33.

William H. Taft, Senators Lodge and Beveridge and many Congressmen. For a few weeks this district in Maine presented a formidable struggle between Capital and Labor. Some of the most brilliant men on both sides went there to battle. Both the Manufacturers' Association and the A. F. of L. had their political agents constantly at work in Maine. There were many amusing as well as revolting features of this campaign. While the fight of Labor was dignified and impressive, the fight of the moneyed interests seems to have consisted largely in debauching the constituency. Although with a greatly reduced vote, Mr. Littlefield was victorious, which was to be expected, perhaps, when we realize that his headquarters on the day of election were packed to suffocation, in that rigidly prohibitionist state, with Democrats so helplessly drunk that they could not go to the polls.

In 1908 the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor called a conference of its affiliated unions and of farmers' organizations to meet in Washington on March 18, 1908. These representatives formulated and adopted what was called "Labor's Protest to Congress." As a result of the indifference, if not actual hostility, shown to Labor's needs and demands by the previous Congress, the protest was more vigorous than its predecessor, the "Bill of Grievances." It showed considerable resentment, and there was something threatening in its tone. What most annoyed the powers in Congress was that the A. F. of L. declared that it would hold Congressmen responsible for their acts.

"We come to you not as political partisans, whether Republican, Democratic, or other, but as representatives of the wage-workers of our country, whose rights, interests, and welfare have been jeopardized and flagrantly, woefully disregarded and neglected. We come to you because you are responsible for legislation, or the failure of legislation. If these, or new questions, are unsettled, and

any other political party becomes responsible for legislation, we shall press home upon its representatives and hold them responsible, equally as we now must hold you."*

This protest was also presented to President Roosevelt, Vice-president Fairbanks and Speaker Cannon. However, the threats of the A. F. of L. proved just as ineffective as its pleadings, and again Congress adjourned, without granting any relief to Labor. In fact, some of the leading Republicans, such as Cannon, Dalzell, Paine, Littlefield, Sherman and Jenkins, were openly opposing Labor and supporting the National Association of Manufacturers. Resenting the threats of Labor, these men declared on the floor of the House that they were willing to accept entire responsibility for their acts. It was evident, however, that they were annoyed, and they expressed openly their utter contempt for the American Federation of Labor.

"We are doing this business," declared Mr. Paine; "we are legislating; we are responsible for what we do, and we are responsible for what we do not do, and we propose to assume the responsibility for it from beginning to end."†

In the same year Mr. Gompers presented to the National Republican Convention at Chicago and to the National Democratic Convention at Denver the demands of Labor. The manufacturers were also active, and it is said that through their efforts over twenty thousand telegrams were received by the Resolutions Committee of the National Republican Convention and by the party leaders protesting against placing in the Republican platform the proposed planks in the interest of Labor. Largely, no doubt, as a result of this work of the manufacturers and the bitterness of certain "stand-pat" politicians, Mr. Gompers, although representing millions of human beings, was treated very badly indeed at the convention of the Repub-

*Report of Proceedings, 1908 Convention, p. 32.

†*American Federationist*, August, 1913, p. 605.

lican Party; and he left Chicago humiliated. He was better received by the Democratic Convention in Denver, and that party actually introduced into its platform certain pledges which, although by no means all that Mr. Gompers desired, were yet such as to make it necessary for him to pledge his support to the Democratic Party. In the campaign of 1908 many representatives of Labor, including Mr. Gompers, entered openly into the campaign and rendered considerable assistance to the Democratic Party in several states of the Union. Nevertheless, the Democrats were badly defeated, and the Republicans, more arrogant than ever, returned victorious. Although none of the avowed enemies of Labor were defeated, several trade-union members running on the Democratic ticket were elected.

In the presidential year of 1912, the American Federation of Labor again sent its representatives to the conventions of the Democratic and Republican parties. The Republican Party still refused to give heed to Labor, and listened instead, Mr. Gompers says, "to the counsel of the interests of the land." At that convention, however, it was split into two sections, Republican and Progressive, and when the latter named Mr. Roosevelt for the presidency, it adopted a platform which not only promised more to the trusts than they had ever dreamed of obtaining, but also promised to the labor movement more than it had ever dreamed of asking. This was, of course, to be expected from a party that needed both votes and money. The Democratic Party, on the other hand, did not pledge so much, but its platform seems to have been entirely satisfactory to the officials of the Federation. In any case, during that campaign they openly urged the Trade Unionists to support the Democratic Party. As is well known, the

1912

result of the election was the defeat of both Mr. Taft and Mr. Roosevelt, while Mr. Wilson, with his party pledged to certain definite labor measures, was in a position to give the legislative relief demanded by the labor movement.

In order to make this record complete, I must mention that in 1913 another move was made to induce the Federation to form an independent labor party. This time the initiative did not come from the Socialists, but from George L. Berry, of the International Printing Pressmen and Assistants' Union. He presented a long resolution at Seattle urging political action, and suggesting that the A. F. of L., the railroad brotherhoods, the Woman's Suffrage League, the farmers' organizations, and the Socialist Party be asked to send delegates to a conference

"for the purpose of establishing a working agreement that will provide the means of joint action upon the political field."*

The Committee on Resolutions reported unfavorably, although it declared that it was

"confident that when our present political activities have suitably matured, a new political party will be the logical result, a party in which will be amalgamated the reform and humanitarian forces."†

In the meantime it urged "non-partisan" political activity and renewed zeal in the promotion of the trade-union movement. Delegate Berry's resolution was badly defeated in the vote, because not only the Trade Unionists of the old parties opposed it, but the Socialists also voted in opposition.

I relate these chapters in the history of the American Federation of Labor because they give a clear idea of the political methods that have now become an established part of the work of that organization. They may be briefly summarized. First, the officials attend the national conventions

*Report of Proceedings, 1913 Convention, A. F. of L., p. 246.

†Report of Proceedings, p. 315.

of the capitalist political parties and seek to pledge those parties to certain labor measures. Second, they endeavor to obtain from those seeking election as legislators definite pledges that they favor certain labor measures. Third, they maintain at all the state capitals and at Washington labor lobbies, intended to accelerate the movement of labor legislation and to watch and report upon the records of legislators. Fourth, the various unions are called upon to take active steps to have actual Trade Unionists nominated, wherever possible, for public office, and to insure their election. Where it is not possible to have Trade Unionists nominated, it is now the declared policy of the Federation to determine which candidates are the friends of labor and then to seek to insure their election. When in 1906 it was acknowledged that the legislative agents had failed to obtain results, the American Federation of Labor was driven into partisan politics. It was forced to renounce some of its earlier non-partisan maxims and to ally itself with one of the capitalist parties, in the hope of getting relief from the wrongs suffered by Labor. The political policies of the American Federation of Labor have evolved year by year. And, while it still professes to be non-partisan, it is now unquestionably allied through its national officers with the Democratic Party.

Mr. Gompers would perhaps dissent from that statement. Even today he likes to declare that he is non-partisan. However, so far as he is concerned the die is now cast, and the fact cannot be disputed that he is at present as much a part of the Democratic Party as any one of its most zealous office seekers. The following facts may throw some light upon his recent political activities. Mr. William J. Bryan wrote to Mr. Gompers, November 10, 1908, a

letter of thanks for his support, in which the following occurs:

"I have been intending to write to you at Washington, but seeing you are in Denver, I write to say that I appreciate most sincerely the powerful support which you gave to our ticket. We have not won, but we deserved to win, and I think that you especially are entitled to great credit for so ably supporting the party which took the laboring man's side on the questions at issue."*

Mr. Gompers also supports the Democratic Party in most of the states. He wrote an enthusiastic letter in support of William Sulzer when he was the Tammany candidate for governor of New York, and this year he supported no less enthusiastically Governor Glynn.

"Governor Glynn deserves well from the workers and the citizenship generally of our great state of New York."†

says Mr. Gompers at the end of a letter dealing with the "splendid constructive work" of the governor. In its issue of October 24, 1914, the *Weekly News Letter* of the American Federation of Labor is filled with extravagant eulogies of the work of the Democratic Party in state and nation. Thousands of free copies have been sent out to be used as campaign documents in all parts of the country in support of the Democratic Party.

This support of the Democratic Party by the officials of the A. F. of L. does not mean that the rank and file of Trade Unionists are Democrats. In fact, there are Trade Unionists running for office in every election as Democrats, Republicans, Progressives and Socialists. Furthermore, the local unions, in many parts of the country, refuse to take a definite stand in the interest of any party. Probably the majority of Trade Unionists are not Democrats, and for that reason the officials of the A. F. of L. have been until

*Proceedings, A. F. of L. Convention, 1908, pp. 139-140.

†The New York Times, October 24, 1914.

recently exceedingly cautious in declaring openly for the Democratic Party. Nevertheless, as it appears, the efforts of the leading officials for some years have been to throw as many labor votes as possible to the support of that party.

Here this bit of history must end. What will happen in the days to come can be at best only a matter for conjecture. The Democratic Party is now in power. It remains to be seen whether it will be possible for it to satisfy the labor movement. In the opinion of the Socialist, no one party can satisfy both Capital and Labor. And it appears to him that the American Federation of Labor has entered upon a very precarious course. The Democratic Party, like most other political parties, seeks the votes of everybody. And it is not surprising that it hopes, by hook or crook, that it can manage somehow to satisfy everybody. History has shown, however, that no single political party has ever yet been able to be true to both Capital and Labor. Their interests are too antagonistic, their differences upon all items of legislation are too profound, to make it conceivable that even such skilful and ambiguous politicians as those who dominate the Democratic Party can be successful in satisfying both these elements. There is, however, one ground for satisfaction in the present situation, even for the Socialist. Labor has thrown itself into the partisan political fight, and no matter how disastrous that may be for a time it must eventually end in some form of political unity, which will enable Labor to be partisan to Labor, as Victor Berger once said.

CHAPTER II.

SOME METHODS OF COMBATING LABOR.

In the summer of 1913 there appeared one morning in our newspapers, under great headlines, the amazing confessions of Martin M. Mulhall, who for several years had been the political agent of the National Association of Manufacturers. Coming suddenly out of the subterranean passages which he had long inhabited, he brought to light a mass of corruption that went far beyond even the findings of the muck-rakers. In the New York *World* and in the Chicago *Tribune* he came before the public to tell his story. Fully prepared for the big job before him, he arrived with satchels full of letters, documents and receipts, which told their own incredible but most authoritative tale. Immediately the mighty began to fall, and in a few days many first-class reputations faded away. A tired and over-heated Congress sat up, took notice and devoured the news. The Senators and Representatives owned by the National Association of Manufacturers realized that at last the fat was in the fire. David M. Parry and John Kirby, Jr., two powerful manufacturers, who had intended going to New Zealand to assail the wicked Socialistic government there, canceled their sailings and hurried to Washington to defend the virtuous manufacturers' government here. The Socialist Commonwealth, or what Mr. Parry prefers to call "The Scarlet Empire," no longer seemed to these gentlemen the most terrifying thing in the world; they were now chiefly concerned to save a few shreds of what they considered to be their reputations. But it was of no use, for if ever a man had "the goods," that man was Martin, their old

companion and fellow worker. Before 1913 he had practiced his art as an informer upon the weak and helpless in the interest of the great and powerful. His long labors had taught him how to prepare his case so that no victim should escape; and, if he had been heartless before, he was relentless now. He was after big game, and he played his rôle magnificently to the end. It was in the nature of poetic justice that those who had employed him most of his life and profited greatly by his infamous craft should have found themselves at the finish betrayed and convicted by their own tool.

Martin was an expert lobbyist and briber, as well as informer. He was skilled in "gum-shoe" work, and was always able to bring to his employers the secrets of their enemy. He knew all the political rôpes and all the back-door entrances to the legislatures of the states and nation. He was the go-between that connected men of the financial circles with the underworld of politics, and, through him, the manufacturers dealt with the bought souls of the labor movement. He was a skilful practitioner in every phase of what we speak of as practical politics, but his greatest gift lay in his ability to steer the labor movement into paths that led it to destruction. He was himself a "labor man," and once the proud member of a Central Labor Union. He early learned the value of the labor influence in politics, and he began to manipulate the labor vote under the tutelage of such masters of political devilry as Matt Quay and Tom Platt. He was an apt pupil, and his schooling was of the best. The Republican bosses thought him a jewel, and he soon developed into a national manipulator. He worked for the National Republican Committee, the National Republican Congressional Committee, and various and sundry Republican state organizations. He did the bidding of

men who are now in Sing Sing as well as the bidding of a president and vice-president of the United States. He was the confidential agent of speakers of the House, of Senators, of Representatives, and of other high officials in the political life of our nation.

Martin was a rare and gifted soul, as open-handed as he was open-armed to all the sinners of politics, poor and rich, low and mighty, in this land of ours. Happily unburdened with any conscience, and cheerfully devoid of all political principles, he had no attachments to men or to movements that were binding, and he was as free as any other outlaw to do whatever mischief needed to be done. He was one of those indispensable men who laughed at laws and merrily defied whatever stood in the way of the nation's welfare,—that is to say, of a Republican victory. He was much loved, used, and commended by such distinguished American citizens as President McKinley, Vice-President Sherman, Senators Quay, Platt, Foraker and Aldrich, Uncle Joe Cannon, James Watson, and many, many others. He was as indispensable to them in the eighties and nineties as he was later indispensable to such great and shining lights of the manufacturing world, as David M. Parry, James W. Van Cleave, C. W. Post and John Kirby, Jr. They were all honorable men who loved the flag, and Martin became their chief instrument for obtaining those things which they felt were necessary to the welfare of their beloved country. He was their agent in politics, their organizer of elections, and their chief lobbyist in Washington, while, in his spare moments, when he was free to turn his wonderful abilities into other paths, he was their master strike-breaker. It would have been difficult for them to have induced Trade Unionists to betray their fellows, and it was a very happy hour when they discovered

poor, but cheerful Martin, ready and willing, for a reasonable wage, to do all this underground labor for them and for other whited sepulchres of our political and industrial oligarchy.

It is nothing to our purpose that Martin was ill-paid, that the sin and wickedness of his task drove his wife insane, or that he was finally "sacked" and calumniated. Nor should we consider it strange that when he came out of the sewer into the limelight of publicity all his once powerful friends forsook him, denied him, and knew him not. Nor is it anything to our purpose that Martin was vindictive, and that when he decided "to get" his rich employers he was as merciless in that as he had previously been in destroying some Senator or Representative who offended the manufacturers by pressing legislation in the interest of the poor. After all, it was not Martin who convicted them. All that he did in the summer of 1913 was to open up his satchels and tumble out *their* documents and letters. Instantly, they found themselves impaled, like the unhappy specimens in a dissecting-room. And all that fall and winter there they were, pinned up against the wall wriggling and squirming, with all the country looking on. They tried to discredit Martin but they could not discredit their own documents. And as the public read them it learned once again that many of the worst criminals in America are not in prison. Martin knew his old employers better than anyone else, and we can sympathize with him when he cries out: "Senator, I want to say that I am here fighting the worst combine that this world ever knew."*

It is well known that the Senate and House of Repre-

*Maintenance of a Lobby to Influence Legislation—Hearings Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on the Judiciary, U. S. Senate, 1913, p. 2519.

sentatives in Washington appointed committees to read the letters and documents of Mulhall. For months they held hearings to determine the truth of the amazing tale of this prince of informers. And now we have six great volumes published by the United States Senate containing all the personal testimony of Mulhall and that of his opponents, together with all the letters and documents that he and others delivered into the hands of its committee. Needless to say, these volumes contain a most valuable series of documents. They are in the nature of a secret history of our time, and to one who sought to write the inside history of the industrial oligarchy that controls our government they would furnish quantities of invaluable material concerning the pernicious activity of a certain group. Unfortunately, the general public will never know much of what these volumes contain or be able to profit by the lessons they teach.

Only one phase of the matter need concern us here. What effect did Mulhall have upon the labor movement? What was his actual influence in the unions? How far was he able to corrupt the leaders of the unions? To what extent was he able to block the efforts of the A. F. of L. and defeat the attempts of the workers to improve their conditions in the shops and to obtain labor legislation? These are the questions that particularly interest us in considering the political policies of the American labor movement. Unquestionably, the documents of Martin Mulhall supply us with much needed information and teach us many invaluable lessons. He takes us back of the scenes where we can see the whole game being played. He shows us the evils, the pitfalls, the fallacies, and the failures of the political methods of labor in America. No one has yet attempted, so far as I know, to examine the testimony of

filled with his exposures, they dealt very little with this phase of his story. They were chiefly concerned with those sensational letters and documents, in which great manufacturers, eminent statesmen, and the other men "higher-up" told of their infamous plots and conspiracies to destroy the labor movement.

Naturally, everybody seemed delighted that, instead of vague rumors and libel-proof accusations of corruption, certain definite individuals and their knavery were at last fully and completely exposed. It seemed good to see these "sappers and miners" held up to the contempt of the country. And it was no more than natural that Mr. Gompers and the other leaders of the American Federation of Labor should have been especially pleased to have had their own particular enemies so completely destroyed. In addition there is one other bit of satisfaction that can be drawn from Martin's testimony. Amidst all the corruption for which he and his employers were responsible they could not corrupt the chief leaders of the American Federation of Labor. If the testimony of Martin Mulhall shows indubitably how futile and impractical the political policies of the A. F. of L. are, if it shows how wide they have opened the door to corruptionists such as he and what immense injury that has done, at least this should be said, that the men who are chiefly responsible for these political policies remain unscathed by his testimony. They are the only ones who come out of all this mess of infamy clean and personally above reproach. However faulty their political methods will appear to be after we have reviewed the testimony of Martin Mulhall, the leaders of the A. F. of L. have been honest in their advocacy of them, unbending in their integrity, and unwavering in their devotion to the best interests, as they saw them, of the labor movement.

If, however, the leaders of the A. F. of L. have not themselves been mired in the corruption that appears to be an inevitable result of their policies, thousands of minor officials have been ruined. If there were bribers, there were also those who were bribed. If Mulhall spent hundreds of thousands of dollars corrupting men, that money was mostly spent in the labor movement. And the most important fact is, that with the aid of money Martin Mulhall was able to block for years the efforts of the American labor movement. He soaped the rails so that for years the labor movement as a political force in this country stood still. The workers fired their great locomotive and the wheels turned violently; there was much action but no movement. This is what Martin did with a little soap, and it is now of the utmost importance that we should find out how it was possible for one clever tool of the manufacturers to block effectually the political efforts and aspirations of two million organized workmen.

In some ways the documents of Martin Mulhall are the most valuable that have ever been placed at the disposal of Labor. If they recite certain distressing facts that make for discouragement, they also contain all the facts necessary to enable the labor movement to destroy forever the corrupting influences in that movement of the manufacturers and political bosses. If Labor will but study carefully the methods of Martin Mulhall, it can devise ways of its own that can withstand him and his kind. Unfortunately, it is not possible to hope that any large number of labor men will ever see the six volumes of Martin's testimony, and for that reason I have undertaken to set forth in the next few pages, as briefly as possible, those facts, which are of vital concern to the labor movement of America.

The work of Martin Mulhall in manipulating the labor

vote is pretty nearly co-extensive with the history of the American Federation of Labor. In his early days he was working chiefly for the Republican bosses. He was then seeking to control the unions in the interest of the Republican Party. He tried to select their officials in order that through them he might guide the political policies of the unions. At election time he organized in all parts of the country political labor clubs, made up as much as possible of Trade Unionists. He was a power in the Knights of Labor, and until a few years ago he always had some Knights upon his payroll. Through Martin, we discover how in one political campaign ten millions of dollars can be usefully spent. For weeks before every election he had, on the secret payroll of the Republican Party, numerous trade-union officials who were supposed to work in the unions and shops in the interest of the Republican Party. It was such men as Martin who got up those great torch-light processions, which were the joy of our boyhood, when thousands upon thousands of workingmen, interspersed with bands, marched most of the night in the interest of one of the capitalist parties. It was such men as he who organized the leagues of workingmen, which pleaded for a protective tariff in the interest of workingmen. It was such men as he who taught the Republican bosses how to make the "full dinner pail" a political issue. And it was such men as he who ground into the very soul of American Labor the extraordinary doctrines: that the chief use of the vote was to foster special privilege; that the chief purpose of politics was to keep the factories booming; and that the chief end of human society was to have the rich wallowing in wealth in order that they might give employment and a full dinner pail to the workingman. Martin was a plausible genius, and he and his kind were

Mulhall from this point of view. When the papers were in no small degree responsible for creating a real devotion, which, unhappily, some workingmen still have, for the Grand Old Party. Of course, there were men like Mulhall in the Democratic Party, just as there were hundreds of others in the Republican Party, and, while we do not yet know all the tricks of their trade, the exposures of Martin give us many valuable hints of how varied and wonderful they were and are.

After Martin's long apprenticeship under the great Republican bosses, he went to work for the National Association of Manufacturers. They wanted a first-class political agent, and Martin came highly recommended, from McKinley, Quay, Platt, Sherman, Cannon and other distinguished politicians. At the head of the work of the National Association of that time was one Marshall Cushing. Formerly a newspaper man, he knew enough about publicity not to want any of it for the back-door work of the manufacturers. He therefore decided that letters should not be signed, and that all communications between the conspirators should be anonymous, and it was he who conceived the happy idea that the Senators and Representatives owned by the manufacturers should be numbered, like convicts. As the agent of powerful financial interests, Cushing became a great political force, and he sat in the offices of the Manufacturers' Association in Washington pulling the strings, which jerked here and there its political puppets. His first assistant was James A. Emery, a suave and oily attorney, whose chief work was to talk to the committees of Congress and to dress down any member who offended the N. A. M. He prepared legal opinions and arguments for the use of the members in Congress and sometimes eloquent and patriotic addresses for use in their

campaigns. Cushing pulled the strings; James was the shining light, and Martin was the corruptionist who handled the slush funds. Most of the time he just "hung around" the Capitol to see that the politicians were doing what they were employed to do, because, as one of the officers wrote him,

"You know * * * how tricky politicians are, and the minute you both have your backs turned they are liable to put up a job on us."*

It seems to have been the chief interest of the manufacturers to block labor legislation. They had no use for anything that Labor wanted, and Martin was there to see that the tricky politicians did not put over anything on the manufacturers in the way of labor legislation. The politicians knew that Martin's eye was upon them, and they rightly suspected that even some of their pages and secretaries were in the pay of the manufacturers. The manufacturers did not, of course, own all the members of Congress. The railroads, the brewers, the Standard Oil, the Beef Trust, and the Steel Trust owned quite a few. There were a few whom nobody owned, and still fewer who were supposed to be owned by Labor. It was Martin's business to know all these things. And when any measure came up in the interest of Labor, it was his business to see that the representatives of the manufacturers were there, that the representatives of other interests were made friendly through the influence of men "higher up," and to see, furthermore, that the "friends of Labor" were induced to stay away. In this manner, for many long years every measure introduced into Congress in the interest of Labor was defeated. For years not a single measure of consequence was ever allowed even to get out of committee.

When Congress adjourned, Martin went out to work

*Maintenance of a Lobby to Influence Legislation, p. 3032.

in the Congressional districts. His activity was incredible, and he seemed able to run a dozen or more campaigns at once.

"If we could only afford to have a worker like you in every state," wrote Schwedtman, secretary to the president of the Manufacturers' Association, "it would be up to us to name the next President."*

Unhappily for our country, Schwedtman spoke the solemn truth, and the better we know Mulhall, the more certain we are that, so long as we continue in servitude to the present political machines he and his kind cannot be beaten. In any case, his own success is beyond belief. On more than one occasion the economy and despatch with which Mulhall did his work brought forth glowing praises from his employers. For it was cheap—when one considers the results. This was especially true when he was in the field trying to elect his candidate or defeat the candidates of the A. F. of L. He seldom had to resort to the wholesale bribery of the voters; he had surer and more easily tapped channels. It was only the labor vote, he says,

"that they (meaning his employers) monkeyed very much with;
* * * they did not look for any other kind of a vote, hardly."†

And, judging from the results Martin obtained, that was the most profitable vote to go after. For not only did he possess a personality that would have been an asset no matter what vote he sought to catch, but many years' experience had given him a wide acquaintance in the unions, which stood him in good stead when it came to getting a job quickly and well done. Knowing one or more men in a union, he would soon thread his way into all the affairs of that union and in a short time get hold of the men of most influence. After sounding them to see if they were

*Maintenance of a Lobby to Influence Legislation, p. 2642.

†*Idem*, p. 2511.

"reliable and trustworthy," he would summon them to his headquarters. There he would usually have some one harangue them in truly patriotic fashion, and then, after doling out to them their "expense" money, he would send them home to do *his work*.

One of these meetings he describes as follows:

"The rooms were packed with a splendid class of intelligent men, among them many members of the unions of the city. One man, who claims he is a member of the union for many years, made a speech eulogizing Mr. Parry, which met with the hearty approval and applaud of those present."*

On another occasion Mr. J. Philip Bird, one of the officials of the N. A. M. did the honors,

"and he made a speech wherein he stated that when he was running a shop he had a strike on, and that he knocked down the principal striker with his fist onto a pile of iron, and knock him out."†

That was going a little too far, and one of the labor leaders protested that he thought it "was very bad judgment and not a bit diplomatic." However, Bird put every one in a good humor by turning over \$200. In another place Mulhall speaks of an approaching miners' convention as follows:

"Three of the district presidents from the anthracite districts are my personal friends from the many favors I have extended to them in the past. I feel that I might be able to do good work through these gentlemen, and it is too bad we are short of funds when this convention is coming and the opportunities before us."‡

It is not important whether Mulhall's money was accepted as a bribe, whether it was accepted merely as a "treat," or whether it was honestly considered as expense money. It is enough to know that the money was accepted, and that in return for the money the so-called leaders of Labor did his bidding, in furnishing information and in sup-

*Maintenance of a Lobby to Influence Legislation, p. 2863.

†*Idem*, p. 3101.

‡*Idem*, p. 2705.

porting his candidates. Some at least among them, according to Mulhall, were honest in their intentions:

"There was a number of these men who were what they called conservatives in labor unions, and as leading Republicans, Republican workers * * * they were against the labor unions going into politics, and they worked along as Republicans against the leadership."*

Whether or not the conservatives are more easily corrupted or more easily led, we shall not inquire into. What we do know, and what stands out like a mountain through all the bulky mass of testimony and documents, is that scores of officials and leading spirits in the trade unions were on the pay-roll of the manufacturers and regularly received stipends to follow their political directions. Some were modest in their demands, but others received regular weekly salaries of forty, fifty and sixty-five dollars. The latter was the salary that Ryan, of the Electrical Workers, commanded, while, says Mulhall, "that \$40 item, . . . you can carry that right along to Frank Feeney, in the New Jersey district."† Collins, Harriman,—who "changed his politics frequently,"—Booth, McWilliams, Ridge, Kurten, Agnew, Tazelaar, Sedicum, Volmer and Price, were but a few of the better paid among his many political workers. In the Watson campaign, he testifies:

"There were 250 men paid there [at headquarters] and a great many were paid by their shops. The plan of campaign was to have two confidential agents from each shop report to headquarters * * * Those men were paid by shops."‡

To give here the names of the unions in which his men were members would be almost to give a roster of the unions affiliated with the A. F. of L.

*Maintenance of a Lobby to Influence Legislation, p. 2499.

†*Idem*, p. 2799.

‡*Idem*, p. 2754.

The National Association of Manufacturers tried to reach the men who were guiding spirits in an organization, men who radiated influence. They hoped that getting these men would mean getting the organization as a whole, but when that purpose was defeated, they tried to disrupt the organization so that it could give no aid to the labor candidate. To get the labor vote, it was necessary to get labor leaders, and, once having made up their minds to get labor leaders, they did not care how they got them. As Van Cleave once said to Mulhall: "What we want is results." On one occasion, when the candidate of the manufacturers, Coudrey, was running against a labor man, Self, in East St. Louis, Coudrey was elected by 600 votes, and Martin testified that the activities of his association amounted easily to more than the balance of power. On another occasion, in fighting Hughes, the present Senator from New Jersey, when he was running for Congress, Mulhall changed two thousand and two hundred votes in Hughes' own district by using twenty-five hundred dollars—which bears out the statement that Martin was a cheap worker. With such results from owning a mere handful of men, is it any wonder that the manufacturers kept these men on their salary list for weeks, months and even years at a time? Or that they placed some of them in government positions for life as pensioners on the people?

With comparatively little money and single-handed, Mulhall not only managed to defeat some of the best friends of Labor, but he was able to elect nearly every man who had done the bidding of the manufacturers. For instance, there is Senator McComas, of Maryland. He was particularly friendly to Labor and supported faithfully nearly all measures advocated by the A. F. of L. To the manufacturers that was, of course, a serious political crime. At

first they undertook to subdue him, but, failing in that they declared war upon him and never afterwards did he have a moment's peace. They bribed his private secretary, who turned over to them any papers or information that might be used against the Senator. At the same time, through the Workingmen's Protective Association of Baltimore—a Republican labor organization of considerable strength—they induced some of the Trade Unionists to work against the Senator. Originally, that association gave its full support to McComas, in return for which the members expected political jobs in Washington for at least two of the leaders, who were presidents of their respective trade unions. Senator McComas, however, disappointed them in this, and it was not very difficult afterward for Mulhall to turn the organization into opposition to the Senator. After that the members passed many resolutions and wrote many letters to the papers, all of which were prepared by Cushing, and all of which assailed the Senator. At first the Manufacturers' Association attempted to take away from the Senator the control of the Maryland delegation to the Republican Convention of 1904. When they failed in that, they followed him to the Convention, and, through their powerful friends, succeeded in keeping him off the National Executive Committee. When the time came for McComas to stand again for election, they worked "against the candidates that would support McComas in the legislature,"* even at the cost of making the legislature Democratic. After years of fighting, they eventually beat McComas. He then became a candidate for one of the judgeships in the Federal courts, and they defeated him there. Even after that they never ceased hammering him, and,

*Maintenance of a Lobby to Influence Legislation, p. 2494.

as Mulhall testifies, "they continued fighting him until he died."*

Congressman George A. Pearre, also of Maryland, was a particular friend of Labor, who, Mulhall says, "stood up for labor legislation at all times."† The N. A. M. tried first to show him the evil of his ways and to induce him to stop his activity in favor of Labor. When he refused to give in, they marked him for destruction. Once more the Workmen's Protective Association was enlisted for the task, and, following models supplied by Cushing, the members wrote letters of protest to Pearre and to the newspapers.

"We have taken an interest in helping to defeat," they declared, "in any way that lay in our power any radical labor legislation which would excite antagonism between the employer and employee."‡

Mulhall also brought outside labor leaders into the district to fight Pearre, all of whom were, he says, "first-class men." They secured, through a union man, a letter from Gompers endorsing Pearre, which proved useful in inducing the manufacturers in the district to "loosen up." On one occasion they beat Pearre for control of his own organization "four to one." And so hot was their fight upon him that the Republican boss of Maryland tried to effect a compromise and suggested that Pearre surrender his seat in Congress in return for his unopposed candidacy as Supreme Court Judge. That did not suit the manufacturers, for they feared that he would be even more dangerous as a judge than as a Congressman. After tremendous work and great expense, Pearre barely succeeded in securing a renomination. He then found himself confronted

*Maintenance of a Lobby to Influence Legislation, p. 2655.

†*Idem*, p. 2637.

‡*Idem*, p. 2530.

by a Trade Unionist, a lawyer who had once been a miner and who ran for Congress as a Democrat. In the face of that and the efforts of Mulhall and his labor co-workers, Pearre narrowly escaped defeat at the election, although the district was normally six to seven thousand Republican. However, with the manufacturers against him and even Labor denouncing him, "Pearre did not stop on his (anti-injunction) bill," says Mulhall, "He went on and fought to a finish."* At last Pearre was defeated, and David J. Lewis, formerly a miner and now a lawyer, went to Washington in Pearre's place. John Kirby, Jr., then writes to Mulhall:

"I have read your letter with much interest, also the newspaper clippings, and note the fatigued condition of Brother Pearre's system, * * * It is too bad that he could not have seen his mistakes before he made them and avoided the attacks of which he now complains. I congratulate you on his retirement, and hope that we shall not have to reckon with a worse 'friend of the workingman' in his stead."†

There were several other friends of Labor marked for destruction by the N. A. M. Perhaps the two most prominent were T. D. Nichols and William B. Wilson, two popular officials of the United Mine Workers of America, who were elected to Congress on the Democratic ticket from Pennsylvania. These men had long and honorable records behind them in the trade-union movement, and it was obvious in advance that there would be no way of reaching them through bribery. As a result, Martin Mulhall was sent into their districts to organize the Trade Unionists to fight them. He claims in one of his letters that he managed to split one union and so divide the men in it that more than a majority were against Nichols. But even more sig-

*Maintenance of a Lobby to Influence Legislation, p. 3071.

†*Idem*, *App.*, p. 3666.

nificant than that is the entry which appears in his financial statements every week for a couple of months before election:

"Paid to one member of the executive board in the miners' union to be used for paying workers in the tenth [Nichols'], eleventh [Lanahan's] and fifteenth [Wilson's] congressional districts of Pennsylvania to do general campaign work, due this date, \$300."*

It is well known that all these labor men were defeated.

Perhaps the biggest fight that was ever made by the N. A. M. to defeat a friend of Labor was that made against Congressman William Hughes of New Jersey. He was formerly a member of the Textile Workers' Union, and has perhaps been the most vigorous and outspoken fighter in Congress in the interest of labor measures. The N. A. M. was never able to defeat him, although Mulhall played every card in his hand and used every trick known to the professional politician. He got every newspaper in the district to turn against Hughes. He sent into the district a score or more of trade-union orators. He even claims to have bribed the organizer sent in by the A. F. of L.

He had "most every worker of any note in that district helping" him. "In addition to that," he reports, "we have got the labor paper of that district, which is one of the best labor sheets there are in the east, heartily in favor of our candidate and against Hughes."†

He bribed one of the organizers of the A. F. of L. to turn over to Hughes' opponents the literature that it had sent into the district in support of Hughes. Thinking that the Socialists might take votes away from Hughes he gave assistance to the Socialist candidate and claims to have spent three thousand dollars in his campaign. He bought a labor paper, the *American Federationist* of New York, and began sending it to the voters in the district.

*Maintenance of a Lobby to Influence Legislation, p. 2938.

†*Idem*, Appendix, p 2293.

Despite the fact that Mulhall decreased the vote given Hughes, he was unable to defeat him.

It is a matter of record that the N. A. M. gave the minutest possible attention to every district where it was thought that a radical or a labor man might have a chance of election. They began with the primaries, and on one occasion Mulhall writes to his employers, "this makes four very rabid labor agitators that we have beaten this summer."* And, in fact, no radical was allowed to escape. He tried to organize a labor campaign against Tom Johnson, the mayor of Cleveland. He wrote to one of the employers:

"I could put you in touch with a number of good workers without cost, which would be, I think, a good deal of help to your organization; besides I feel sure that there are many of our members in Cleveland, who will take an active part in politics there this fall, and will try to relegate to the rear your present mayor, Thomas Johnson."†

When William D. Mahon appeared on the horizon in Detroit as a labor candidate, the N. A. M. lost no time in getting after him, and he was defeated the first time he went to the polls. The manufacturers also defeated Lanahan in Pennsylvania and Hunt in Missouri, who were trade unionists; while in Massachusetts they put up a stiff fight against Keliher and O'Connell.

"I am very proud to report," Mulhall writes to Parry, "that both those men were beaten in the primaries."‡

In all these instances Mulhall worked through Trade Unionists. On one trip to Boston he gathered together twenty-two of the "best known labor workers" in that city to fight the policies of the A. F. of L. A few days later

*Maintenance of a Lobby to Influence Legislation, p. 3259.

†*Idem*, App., p. 1022.

‡*Idem*, p. 3259.

he wrote to the Chairman of the Republican State Committee suggesting that he import State Senator Dick of Maryland, president of the Miners' Union in that state, "who is a very eloquent orator, to work among the labor unions."*

He also urged the employment of Dr. J. Langtry Crockett, of Maine, who was distinguished as having once been the physician of Mr. Samuel Gompers.

When the manufacturers dared not defeat one friend of Labor for fear that another might get in, they tried to buy off the first or to build such a back-fire behind him that he thought it wiser not to remain the friend of Labor. For instance, they tried to buy Senator McComas; they sought to compromise with Congressman Pearre; they induced Gardner of New Jersey to "lay down"; and they went after the brewery interests to "touch up" Bartholdt, and, through them, they finally quieted him. McDermott of Illinois, an actual workingman and Trade Unionist, was early brought over to serve the manufacturers. He put his frank at their disposal and also a room in the Capitol. He carried the secrets of the A. F. of L. directly over to Mulhall. For years Mulhall was making "loans" regularly to McDermott, and, when one of the Senators asked Mr. Mulhall if McDermott had not been a considerable drain on his resources, Mulhall replied: "For the information he furnished . . . I guess we—I guess I got my money's worth."† I have just mentioned the fact that David J. Lewis was the "card man"‡ who defeated Congressman Pearre. Well, here is what Mulhall says of him on March

*Maintenance of a Lobby to Influence Legislation, App. p. 3697.

†*Idem*, p. 3354.

‡One who holds a paid-up membership in any trade union is referred to in labor circles as a "card man."

24, 1911: "I believed that Lewis would be friendly to labor, but I found that this was not the case."* Another "card man," Frank Buchanan, of the Iron Workers' Union, was elected from Illinois, while James P. Maher, of the Hatters' Union, was elected from New York. In Mulhall's notes these mysterious sentences appear:

"Mr. James P. Maher is non-committal at the present time, but I believe he will come around all right. Mr. Buchanan told me in my interview with him yesterday that it would be his ambition to do all he could to get some of the labor bills that have been stalled in the Labor Committee out of it at the earliest opportunity. Mr. Buchanan certainly is a new member. This is his first term, and I think a little good work will have him change his mind."†

Much clearer are statements of Mulhall concerning Carey, a "card man" from Milwaukee, Kendall of Iowa, and Gallagher of Illinois:

"I have kept no itemized statement of the amount of mail we have sent out, but I have sent a number of letters to Hughes', Buchanan's, Wilson's and other districts, and I have been attempting * * * to start a systematic campaign against our enemies, and in this, in a measure, we have been successful, for Kendall of Iowa, Carey of Wisconsin and Gallagher of Illinois have quit their activities for the labor people on account of our activities along those and other lines. And I have been doing this with the lowest possible cost."‡

The manufacturers had no scruples whatever about trying to bribe men. They had constantly in their pay, as I have said, the secretary to Senator McComas. They bribed the pages in Congress and the bookkeeper in the office of the American Federation of Labor. They got control of McDermott through their "loans," and, of course, in all the political campaigns they bribed hundreds of trade-union officials. Mulhall was an old hand at this game. and,

*Maintenance of a Lobby to Influence Legislation, p. 3327.

†*Idem*, App., pp. 4245-4246.

‡*Idem*, p. 3906-7.

in the interest of the Republican bosses of Pennsylvania, Senator Quay and Governor Stone, he tried in every way possible to win the friendship of John Mitchell and other officials of the Miners' Union in Pennsylvania. Pretending to be an active and enthusiastic labor man, who was bitterly opposed to the Coal and Iron Police of Pennsylvania, and expressing the deepest sympathy with the miners in their industrial troubles, he managed to worm his way into an acquaintanceship with John Mitchell. Despite everything he could do, however, Mitchell remained completely beyond his influence, and, although many efforts were made, Mitchell refused to hold any conferences with the political leaders of Pennsylvania. Even more despicable than this was the effort of the N. A. M. to bribe Mr. Samuel Gompers. It may be remembered that in September, 1908, all the newspapers carried the story of Brandenburg's attempt to bribe Gompers. The stories vary. One says that Gompers was offered an income of fifty-five to sixty thousand dollars a year for the remainder of his life if he would come into the service of the National Association of Manufacturers. Another says that the sum offered him was five to six thousand dollars a year. In any case, there was a carefully worked out plan to entrap Mr. Gompers and to see if he could not be induced to betray Labor. Fortunately, as I said before, there is no evidence to show that any of the nationally prominent leaders of the A. F. of L. were or could be bribed by the N. A. M.

There are many amusing comments made by Mulhall and his employers upon their tools in these campaigns against Labor. H. E. Miles, one of the influential men in the association, wrote on one occasion to Mr. Van Cleave,

"We have secured as Chairman of the big Labor Meeting here

Thursday a Democrat now acting mayor and wearing a Taft button, a laboring man and a labor leader. We are making a Christian of him."*

* On another occasion Mr. Schwedtman writes to Mulhall in utter despair regarding one of the Illinois districts:

"The chances are that in the next election, the same as in former ones, it will be a Democratic union man against a Republican union man. There are no more decent people living in East St. Louis."†

It seems that when labor leaders were bought they became "Christians"; when they could not be bought they were "agitators," "murderers," and "dynamiters,"—which sounds reasonable when we learn from Schwedtman: "The good Lord is on our side, and we are going to win."‡ As was natural his God and Mammon worked hand in hand, and as a very good instance of that, we find the brewers donating great sums to elect Judge Jenkins, while H. E. Miles, the evangelist, was lining up in his support the Clergy and even the Prohibitionists. Amusing also is a story concerning some of the labor men in the big Indianapolis campaign, when thirty thousand workingmen turned out.

"I appointed," says Mulhall, "thirty-one different marshals of the parade * * * To give you an illustration of the work of our marshals, Mr. Speicher, who is one of the leaders of union labor in this city, * * * got a very spirited horse and when the bands commenced to play, Speicher's horse bolted into the midst of a large delegation of negroes. He knocked down seventeen negroes and the balance he put to flight. * * * This was about our experience along the line. There were a lot of fellows who had never rode a horse and they were all afraid to move, thinking they might be thrown."§

Evidently the manufacturers had not a little amusement over the labor men they bought.

*Maintenance of a Lobby to Influence Legislation, p. 2085.

†*Idem*, App. p. 3645.

‡*Idem*, p. 2800.

§*Idem*, App., p. 2227.

Although Mulhall was primarily a political worker, the manufacturers sought to utilize his spare time at strike-breaking. He always hated that kind of work, and, as a matter of fact, first broke with the Association when he refused to continue in it. He despised Emery for his heartlessness in such matters:

"I have never seen," he says, "a more subservient tool to people of that stripe in my life than what Mr. Emery was."*

He flatly told Mr. Kirby that he "would not stand for any more strike work or going into any more strike-breaking enterprises."† Nevertheless for a time Martin did big work in that line. With the organization at hand to fight the advancement of Labor on the political field, ordinary principles of economy taught the manufacturers that the same organization should be made to fight Labor on the industrial field. In addition, the same labor men who had been employed for political work could be used also for industrial work. It is true that in some cases the labor leaders that Mulhall bought to fight his political battles refused to work for him in his strike-breaking enterprises, but in the majority of cases, those who started in by furnishing political information and doing political work for Mulhall ended as strike-breakers.

"I showed to our manager," Mulhall says, "that Cushing frequently took advantage of men we had working for us when we did campaign work, and that they were always successful whenever they were used in strikes in doing first-class work and getting good results."‡

Something of his method is also shown in the following statement from the same letter:

"I showed to Mr. Bird that there were several prominent labor workers who are well known throughout the country that we could send into the different districts where the strike is on [referring

*Maintenance of a Lobby to Influence Legislation, p. 3205.

†*Idem.*

‡*Idem.*, p. 3045.

to the hatters' strike] to have that strike called off, and that I thought that such members as that would have more influence in breaking up a strike than what they could get by importing outsiders to take the place of the striking hatters. I mentioned to Mr. Bird several names of labor workers whom I lately had in my employ, and I knew that those men were ready to do what they would be told to do if we wished their services along those lines."*

It would be hard to conceive of that as an idle boast, but if more proof is needed, instances are not lacking where the information was actually furnished by these men or where they took an active part in breaking strikes. In a letter written to George F. Baer, the coal baron, under instructions from J. W. Van Cleave, Mulhall says:

"For a number of years this organization has been handling a large number of active labor workers along the line of political work, and information has come to our office here lately that there will be an extended strike in the anthracite coal regions this coming year; that is, unless the labor unions are granted many concessions and are recognized after the 1st of next April.

"This seems to be the general information given to our office, and we have had in our employ in the late campaign many members of the miners' union and some of their executive officers.

* * * * *

"We have many men in our employ who have been for years in close touch with the miners' union, and those men we feel will be of great service to you in furnishing you with information, free of cost, if you wish their aid."†

In Philadelphia, during a strike among the printers, Mulhall's political followers, Collins, Price and Ryan, went to the other unions in the city to stop sympathetic contributions, furnished information to the boss printers, and in every way fought the strike until it failed. In a machinists' strike in Cleveland, Volmer, another political worker and friend of Mulhall's, succeeded, for a consideration, in having the strike called off. Later, when the machinists issued a boycott against a manufacturer, Volmer again came to the front and immediately executed Mulhall's order to

*Maintenance of a Lobby to Influence Legislation, p. 3045.

†*Idem*, p. 2964.

have it called off. On this occasion Volmer introduced him to nine members of the Machinists' Union, with whom he had a long political talk, and he reports:

"I entertained the executive board that evening, and I feel that I might be able to get a couple of good political workers out of the crowd, providing I need them this fall."*

Imagine the situation which here existed. The Manufacturers' Association was bent upon annihilating the A. F. of L. It was spending hundreds of thousands of dollars not only to destroy it politically, but also to break every one of its strikes. Yet Mulhall had in his employ hundreds of Trade Unionists,—shoemakers, glass workers, miners, painters, machinists, loom-fixers, weavers,—who were not only willing to do political work, but also to break strikes. Political treason is not yet, unhappily, a serious crime in America; but there is no treason less likely to be forgiven by the ordinary Trade Unionist than treason at the time of a strike. If workingmen are not loyal to each other in that hour of trial, nothing in this world can bind them together. If it should once be generally believed that strikers cannot depend upon the integrity of their leaders, if the notion should ever prevail among Trade Unionists that some of their comrades were secretly working for the bosses, there would remain no bond of union in the labor movement. Men would not leave the shops if they thought that they were to be betrayed. Men would not enter upon a battle, which in some ways is even more terrifying than civil war, if they felt that perhaps in their own ranks there were traitors and spies. Political treason is infinitely less to be dreaded than this, because the fight on election day cannot be, in the nature of the case, so imperative and final as a strike. And, while Trade Unionists forgive many political misdeeds, they consider no punishment too severe

*Maintenance of a Lobby to Influence Legislation, p. 2782.

for a man who betrays his comrades in a strike. Let us hope that we exaggerate somewhat the importance of the facts given by Mulhall, but even so we can not escape the conclusion that a trade-union movement which fosters political corruption cannot eradicate from its midst other forms of corruption. When men once sell themselves to their enemies for political work, they are soon led to sell themselves to these same enemies for strike work. Is it not fair to assume, then, that unless the trade-union movement of this country roots out from itself all the political corruptionists of the old machines, it can not, even in its industrial struggles, preserve complete its integrity to the working class?

Here we must end the sickening testimony of Martin Mulhall. No one, I think, can read it without concluding that the political methods of the A. F. of L. open wide the door to corruption. Mulhall and the political bosses are invited to enter, and once there they buy up or otherwise get control of many trade-union leaders, speakers and editors, not to mention the trade unions themselves. This necessarily creates suspicion among the rank and file. They see some of their leaders becoming the lackeys of the political bosses. They see them spending the money of these bosses in drunkenness and debauchery and they feel, not without reason, that the trade-union movement is being demoralized. Nothing could be more injurious to the cause of Labor than methods which foster the disgust, undermine the integrity, ruin the morality, and break the solidarity of the working class. These evils, in truth, now threaten the very existence of the American labor movement and they seem to be due to the adoption of a political policy which is well-nigh suicidal. But of this we shall see more in the next chapter, which deals with the relation of the labor movement to the capitalist parties.

CHAPTER III.

LABOR AND THE CAPITALIST PARTIES.

In the first chapter I tried to state as accurately as possible the political ideas and methods of the American Federation of Labor, or, perhaps I should say, of its chief officials. I endeavored to show their evolution from year to year and the struggle made by Socialist Trade Unionists to change these policies and to create here an independent labor party similar to those existing in Europe. In the next chapter I sought to show how the present methods of the American Federation of Labor work out in practice, and with Martin Mulhall we went behind the scenes and uncovered an incredible mass of political corruption. By stating as accurately and as dispassionately as possible the facts, both as to the theory and the practice of the politics of the American Federation of Labor, I have sought to make it possible for the reader to arrive at his own conclusions. If, after carefully weighing the evidence, he arrives at conclusions differing from my own, I have no complaint to make. I shall seek in the next few pages to discuss more critically the political policies of the A. F. of L. I shall put aside for the moment all consideration of their incidental evils—such as graft, bribery, and corruption—and I shall examine them merely as theories of political action and see if it is possible for reasonable men to believe that they can be successful.

It seems to me that such a critical discussion should begin by trying to determine why it is that although the trade unions are a powerful force in the industrial life of the nation, they exercise almost no influence over the politics

of the nation. This is, of course, not accidental; there must be good reasons for power in the one case and powerlessness in the other. It is the ambition of a trade union so to extend its organization as to be in a position to insist that the employers bargain collectively with the workers in its trade. To attain this very desirable means of adjusting differences between masters and men, force is necessary, and in this case the force employed is the power to declare a strike with the assurance that the men will in a body leave the shops. Until a trade union is in position to wage a successful battle, it is not in position to bargain with the employer. It does no good to threaten him with a strike unless it is actually possible to bring the men out. Rarely is a trade union able to force an employer to bargain with it at all until it has waged two or three successful industrial battles. But a successful strike demands unity of action among the men, and this in turn depends upon the belief prevailing among them that when a strike is called and proves successful, all the men involved in it will be benefited. The power of a trade union is collective; the method it uses to force a bargain is collective; and the benefits obtained should be collective. All modern Trade Unionism is based upon these fundamental ideas, and it is the object of the trade-union movements of all the various countries so to strengthen themselves that ultimately they will be able to obtain the best conditions, the shortest hours, and the highest wages that it is possible for capitalism to grant. In so far as industry is concerned, the idea and the practice of collective bargaining have made tremendous advances in recent decades, and millions of men are today, through collective bargaining, immensely improving the conditions of their life and work.

Collective force, which is so fundamentally necessary

to Trade Unionists in dealing with their employers, underlies also, to a certain extent, the political movements of workingmen. Consciously or unconsciously, this idea exists in the brain of Mr. Gompers, when, for instance, he goes to the conventions of the great political parties and endeavors to persuade them to adopt a platform favorable to the labor movement. Representing an immense body of organized workingmen, he naturally expects to receive a respectful hearing and to influence in a measure the policies of the great parties. On more than one occasion, however, he has been amazed to find the chief leaders of our political parties treating him with scant consideration. Certainly, this is not because the demands of Labor are not ably presented by Mr. Gompers. Nor is it because his personality or his intellect or his integrity is at the slightest disadvantage in comparison with the leaders of those parties. His force, his eloquence, and his ability are in reality outstanding whenever it happens that he is placed amidst the political leaders of the country. Why is it, then, that neither he personally nor the great movement he represents can make any effective or durable impression upon the bosses of the political machines? Why is it that one representing the wishes of over two million voters should be treated contemptuously by those very parties which in every election devise the most ingenious and even criminal methods to obtain those two million votes. There is hardly any doubt that if he had actually the power to sell and deliver those votes they would buy them outright. They would almost bargain their souls for those votes; yet it is a singular fact that they have rarely given Mr. Gompers even a decent hearing, much less what he wants. On first thought this appears not only incredible but most impractical, unbusinesslike, if not suicidal, on the part of the capitalist parties,

Yet no one will, I suppose, question that the political bosses know their trade pretty thoroughly. To them success in elections means everything—influence, wealth, power. But politics is an expensive game, which requires millions of money, and the bosses want that first. Obviously, they cannot get it from Mr. Gompers nor his fellow Trade Unionists. Nor can they get it from the rich and powerful if they appear too friendly to Labor or adopt platforms to please Mr. Gompers. Besides, they do not want votes until election day, while they need money for months before that day. The thought, then, that controls the action of most of the delegates to the National Democratic and Republican conventions is to create a favorable impression upon their financial backers. The railroads, the trusts, the manufacturers, and the bankers all have their axes to grind, and under the stairs at all the great party conventions we find little knots of men bargaining for what they want. Every political convention is a market-place, where a great variety of selfish interests come to bargain. And, if a political party promises to a group of capitalists enormous benefits, it expects and usually obtains from those capitalists a corresponding financial support. The capitalists cannot guarantee to the political parties millions of votes, but they can guarantee to the political parties millions of dollars. And when they pledge these huge sums, they insist that the parties shall put up candidates in whom Capital has the utmost confidence and adopt platforms that shall be on the whole entirely satisfactory to the interests of capitalism. Pledges are made on both sides; and, after a week of noises above the stage and private contracts below the stage, the great national political market-places are closed, and a farcical campaign begins.

The question may still be asked, Why cannot Labor also

bargain with the political bosses? The parties want votes as well as money. Why, then, is it that a man who actually represents millions of men cannot be heard? The reason appears to be this, that neither Mr. Gompers, the Executive Council, nor the Federation of Labor as a whole has any power to pledge the vote of Labor to any party. If a political party were to adopt a platform pledging to Labor certain vital reforms, and, if it took that action because the leaders of Labor had pressed it to do so, it would assume that in return it would have the electoral support of Labor. No capitalist party seems willing to pledge itself to anything unless it is sure that it will receive in return either dollars or votes. When, therefore, the A. F. of L. seeks to write its demands into the program of any political party, the bosses inquire, What power has this Federation to swing the votes of the Trade Unionists of this country to the support of our party? If the party leaders believe that the A. F. of L. is powerless to control the votes of its members, it is certain that they will have little time in this busy week of bargaining to bother about Mr. Gompers.

The success of the political methods of the American Federation of Labor depends entirely, then, upon its ability to influence the votes of its membership. It cannot get very far on a mere bluff. If it threatens, it must carry out its threats. If it pledges, it must carry out its pledges. It must deliver the goods. If it does not, or cannot, its power and influence over the policies of the great parties, as well as over the acts of the legislatures, will amount to little. If it is an impossibility for the American Federation of Labor to swing the labor vote from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party, or from the Republican Party to the Democratic Party, the methods adopted by the Federation must end in complete failure. If its friends are defeated,

and its enemies are victorious, the politicians will quickly enough discover that Labor can neither carry out its threats nor perform its pledges.

The manufacturers at first greatly feared the political power of the A. F. of L. Mulhall, however, soon convinced them that they need not have the least concern. In fact, the ease with which Mulhall was able to carry out the designs of the manufacturers filled them with confidence, and, whenever the American Federation of Labor undertook to elect any candidate, they felt little if any apprehension.

"Mr. Gompers," Mulhall reports, "will never be able to bring the labor organizations into politics to any great extent, for he and his followers have been preaching on the opposite side of the house for the past twenty years and advising the labor organizations to keep out of politics."*

"Of course," he says in another place, when ridiculing their efforts to discredit him, "I always believe in quiet and effective work, and I know of many occasions where a brick house has fallen on these fellows and they did not know who knocked the props down."†

Mulhall, at least, had no doubt whatsoever that he could manipulate the labor vote. The only uneasiness that he and his colleagues felt was that the politicians might yield to the threats of the A. F. of L.

"I feel confident," he says, "that the labor unions are not effective, so far as politics are concerned, and it would not take much work to show to the politicians that the American Federation of Labor has but very little influence in the Eastern States."‡

He tried hard to convince them, and for the most part succeeded in doing so, that the Federation was not a power but a "bugaboo." It seems that at first Mr. Taft feared the labor vote, but Mulhall reports to his office:

*Maintenance of a Lobby to Influence Legislation; Hearings before a subcommittee of the Committee on the Judiciary, U. S. Senate, 1913, p. 2535.

†*Idem*, p. 2853.

‡*Idem*, p. 3126.

"I fully convinced him [referring to Vorys, Taft's political manager] that Gompers and the labor unions were not organized to play politics and the so-called leaders of the labor unions were not able and never have been able to control the votes of the members of their organization."*

It must be borne in mind that these statements are ones that Martin made privately to his employers. He was engaged to combat single-handed the work of the Federation, and there could have been no possible incentive for him to have belittled its power. He was employed to sneak through the lines and to destroy from within the American labor movement. He was expected to block every effort made by the most powerful individual in that movement. And it was child's play. In the private opinion of the worst enemies of Labor, the methods of the A. F. of L. were so weak and ineffective that they did not require the entire time of one man to defeat them.

The real political weakness of the A. F. of L. lies in the fact that it is endeavoring to bargain with the great political parties without being able honestly to promise those parties anything whatsoever. And here we find the explanation for the failure of Labor to obtain the little it asks and also for the insults showered upon Mr. Gompers by the political bosses. It is the frankly uttered opinion of a large majority of politicians, and it is the opinion of Mulhall and the manufacturers, that the labor movement of this country cannot deliver the votes. They are convinced—and it is most decidedly their business to know—that the American Federation of Labor is in no position either to reward its friends or punish its enemies. It is not organized for that purpose. However, the above opinions are not the only basis we have for the belief that the A. F. of L. can neither fulfill any pledges made to its friends nor carry out any threats against

*Maintenance of a Lobby to Influence Legislation, p. 2750.

its enemies. Mr. Gompers himself admits his helplessness. When the House Committee investigating the Mulhall confessions asked Mr. Gompers if he pretended to exercise any power over the votes of Trade Unionists, he declared:

"The American Federation of Labor * * * never undertook to do so, and it does not today. Speaking now as its president, I have always endeavored to make that clear. As a matter of fact, during the 1908 campaign it was studiously circulated and repeated time and time again by the spellbinders who were opposed to us that I had pledged the 2,000,000 votes of the workmen to the Democratic party; that I carried the workman's vote around in my vest pocket. And I took occasion to say that I could dictate the vote of not more than one citizen in the United States; * * * that the only one whose vote I could control was my own."*

Although this is undoubtedly a truthful confession, he who makes it does not seem to realize that it knocks the entire bottom out of the political methods and policies of the American Federation of Labor. For thirty-three years Mr. Gompers has threatened political parties and individual politicians that unless some measure of relief were given to the laboring classes, retribution would follow. Yet here he is openly confessing that neither he nor the A. F. of L. can control the labor vote. This is a fatal admission, for, unless in convention or by referendum the A. F. of L. can pledge the vote of Labor to one or the other of the great parties, there is no possibility of its bargaining with those parties. This is clearly proved by the experience of the last few years. The politicians have not time to bother with Mr. Gompers. They figure that Trade Unionists are by conviction Republicans, Democrats, Progressives, Socialists, or Prohibitionists, and that the majority of them will vote for those parties and principles regardless of what Mr. Gompers and the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. desire. And

*Charges against House Members and Lobby Activities of the N. A. M. and Others, Sept. 11, 1913, p. 2479.

for the rest, most of them must be bought anyhow. American politics is a coldblooded, mercenary game. Political bosses and most of the other active men in the political machines are in politics for one purpose only and that is to get everything possible out of it for themselves. To succeed, they must win elections, and to do so they must bargain for the goods and then see that the goods are delivered. Consequently, they refuse to bargain with any man, no matter how big he may be, who promises to deliver certain goods to them and is found incapable of doing so.

For some reason, Mr. Gompers appears not to realize that the chief cause of the present political impotence of the Federation is its unwillingness or inability to induce Labor to vote as a unit. He would be much amused if he were to see labor leaders anywhere threatening a strike if it were impossible for those leaders to call a strike. He would understand perfectly that the employers would not long remain insensible to the impotence of such labor leaders. How long would a trade union last which was forever threatening strikes but never able to wage one? Would any trade-union leader be able to deal with an employer if he were to confess that he could control no man's action except his own? Is it conceivable that the employer would grant better conditions, shorter hours, or higher wages on the plea of even Mr. Gompers himself if he were to admit in advance that neither he nor his organization had any power over the men and that they would strike or work as best suited them as individuals? The success of the trade-union movement is based on the power to wage a collective battle. The real power of Trade Unionism is represented, not by the threats of the leaders, but by the grim determination of all the members to act as a unit, to strike work or to return to work.

Everyone will admit, of course, that this power is a very great power, and that the majority, in using it, often overrides the will of individuals and at times even of a considerable minority. Members of a trade union pool their interests. If it is to the interest, then, of a majority to strike, a strike is called, even though a minority may actually suffer. Moreover, each member of a trade union delegates to the majority the power to control absolutely his actions at certain times. Decisions of the union, even though against his individual interests, must be obeyed, and he often goes out to starve with the others, although he individually might have remained at work under the best of conditions, with hours, wages, and everything else to his liking. But, in order that he may be protected at other times, he is willing to consent on certain occasions to suffer for the sake of others. It is hardly possible to exaggerate the power that is exercised by the trade union over the life and welfare of its members. Each workman gives up his freedom to work when he pleases, where he pleases, for whom he pleases, and under what conditions he pleases; but he does this because he feels that by pooling his interest with that of others his gain in the end, both in freedom and in material benefits, will be greater than if he acted alone. It is this willingness on the part of the Trade Unionists to move together that constitutes the power of the trade unions, and, until some organization exercises the same power over the political activity of workingmen, there will be no possibility whatever of Labor's bargaining collectively with opposing economic forces. In other words, not until the workers are organized into their political unions, where they can pool their political interests and act at all times as a unit at the polls, will Labor ever be able to achieve the greatest results from its political action.

It is the absence of collective action that renders American Labor politically helpless. This is the chief cause for all its political failures. If Labor here had acted in its strikes as it has acted in politics, it would never have won a single battle, and what most astonishes the observer is this, that a movement which has evolved such wise and efficient tactics in its industrial struggles should have been unable or unwilling to use the same tactics in its political struggles. There is no difference whatsoever in the tactics to be employed. Precisely the same methods employed today by the trade unions in every great industrial battle would, if applied to their political battles, win for them immense and lasting social, economic, and political reforms.

Some of the leaders of the A. F. of L., who in every strike urge the workers to stand as a unit against Capital, preach and practice harmony between Capital and Labor at the polls. Although this is a most obvious fact, if any Socialist ventures to call attention to it, Mr. Gompers becomes irate. Not long ago he wrote in the *American Federationist*:

"Never in my life, have I ever said or hinted that there was or could be 'harmony between labor and capital.'"^{*}

This, of course, is the official position of the A. F. of L. In its first declaration, in 1881, it says:

"A struggle is going on in the nations of the civilized world between the oppressors and the oppressed of all countries, a struggle between capital and labor, which must grow in intensity from year to year and work disastrous results to the toiling millions of all nations if not combined for mutual protection and benefit."[†]

But if it is only through organization that Labor can protect and benefit itself, why should Labor that organizes itself industrially to battle with its oppressors refuse to or-

^{*}Vol. XIX, p. 140 (Feb., 1912).

[†]Report of Proceedings, 1881 Convention, p. 3.

ganize itself politically for the same purpose? Why should it fight the employers by striking and refuse to fight those same employers when they seek to write the laws of the country? The Socialist often accuses Mr. Gompers of believing that there should be harmony between the exploiter and the exploited in present society, because of the position he takes upon matters that chiefly concern the Socialists. For instance, his intimate association in the Civic Federation with some of the bitterest enemies of the labor movement, has conveyed the impression that Mr. Gompers believes in harmony between Capital and Labor. But even more than this, his attitude in politics has apparently been based for thirty-three years upon the assumption that Labor and Capital must work side by side in politics. That was, of course, Mulhall's theory. And, indeed, what else but a desire for harmony between Capital and Labor could induce one to plead with the Trade Unionists of America to enter the Democratic Party and to give it their support?

Does Mr. Gompers think that the Democratic Party is not controlled by Capital? Is he ignorant of the fact that millions upon millions have been contributed to that party by mill-owners, mine-owners, manufacturers, public-service owners, railway magnates, and bankers? Can he have the slightest doubt lingering in his mind that that party is owned and absolutely controlled by the great capitalists? If he does not believe in harmony between Capital and Labor, why, then, does he urge the workingmen of this country to unite with great capitalists in the Democratic Party? Evidently, Mr. Gompers hopes that by this co-operation the workers will be able to obtain laws for their own benefit. The questions, then, that present themselves are these: Do mill-owners and manufacturers believe in factory legislation and in eight-hour laws? Do traction magnates be-

lieve in municipal ownership? Do mine-owners believe in costly appliances for protecting the lives of the men? Do all these employers favor trade unions and the right of their men to strike, picket and boycott? If they are in favor of higher wages, shorter hours, and better conditions for the toiling millions, why, then, is it necessary to have a trade-union movement at all? Why should not all the affairs of workingmen be left to them, both in the shops and in the legislatures? Why is it that Mr. Gompers is so persistent in urging the workers to fight the mill-owners, mine-owners, and manufacturers, by trade-union organization, and so urgent that the workers shall unite with them in the Democratic Party in the hope of obtaining the legislative relief Labor demands? Is it possible to conceive of politics more contradictory to the spirit and methods of Trade Unionism or more utterly oblivious to the actual facts of our industrial and political life than these of Mr. Gompers?

Not only the history of our own country, but the history of other countries points out the folly of such political harmony between Capital and Labor. For nearly forty years, the Trade Unionists of Great Britain have sent labor men into Parliament as Liberals. The Liberal Party occupies in England much the same position as the Democratic Party occupies in this country. And when the trade-union movement felt that it ought to have some of its own men in the law-making bodies, the Liberals consented to take up those men and put them into Parliament, just as the Democrats here have consented to do likewise. For twenty years or more, before the formation of the present British Labor Party, there were about a dozen Trade Unionists in the British House of Commons. But let anyone examine the legislative record of these men and he will find that they accomplished practically nothing of value to the workers of Great

Britain. These "card men" were tied to the Liberal organization and they could do nothing without its consent. Their campaign expenses were paid by the Liberals, and they sat in the House of Commons at the mercy of the Liberals. The result was that they were merely the lackeys of that party. These are the undisputed facts of history. They are facts which have been given to Mr. Gompers again and again by the British Fraternal Delegates to the A. F. of L. Although the chief Liberal labor leaders were miners, it was not until the Labor Party was formed that the miners obtained their eight-hour law. So long as the British workers believed in working in harmony with the Liberals, they accomplished nothing. As soon as they broke away from that corrupting and demoralizing alliance and decided to fight both Liberals and Tories, they began to achieve actual results for the benefit of Labor. The same bit of history is now being enacted in this country. There are trade-union "card men" in the House of Representatives put there by the bosses of the Democratic Party, and they can sit there so long as they are not troublesome, so long as they vote for everything the capitalists of the Democratic Party want, and so long as they do not press labor legislation that the capitalists of the Democratic Party do not want.

Let us see what this Democratic Party actually is. In the first place, there are two Democratic Parties, one dominated by the Bourbons of the South, the other dominated by the public-service corporations of the North. In the North, the Democratic Party has for years been very strong in many large cities and in control of a few states. In the South it controls everywhere both the cities and the states. Because of its power in the cities of the North, it has been dominated for a quarter of a century by gas, water, electric light, street railway and other corporate interests. Bel-

mont, Ryan, Roger Sullivan, and Tom Taggart are large promoters of financial operations in municipal public utilities; and it is well known that those men have in recent years dominated the Democratic Party in the North, as W. C. Whitney did before them. They are the rich and powerful financial magnates who have raised the funds that have created such worthy political bosses as Dick Croker, Charlie Murphy, "Big" and "Little" Tim Sullivan, "Hinky-Dink," "Bathhouse John," and hundreds of others. These genial bosses of the political machines exercised their tremendous power in the political life of our cities, not because they were superior to other men in kindness, in good-fellowship, or in personal popularity; they were powerful political leaders because they had millions to spend, and those millions were given them by the public-service corporations. It may, perhaps, be argued that all that the public-service corporations want is their franchises, and that several of these big financiers are not personally opposed to some of the demands of Labor. Unfortunately even that is not true. There have been, in fact, no bitterer enemies of Trade Unionism than precisely these great financial kings of the Democratic Party. Just as they support men of the type of Tim Sullivan, so they keep always at hand men of the type of Farley, with thousands of trolley-men, motormen, and other strike-breakers. They have their political agents to handle the labor vote just as they have the industrial agents to handle strikes. The political bosses of the Democratic Party are precisely of the same type as the men who are running the strike-breaking agencies of the country. The public-service corporations of the North, that dominate the Democratic Party, employ political bosses to destroy the influence of Labor politically, just as they employ "Pinkertons" and strike-breakers to destroy the influence of Labor

industrially. Surely, Mr. Gompers is not ignorant of these facts.

The other Democratic Party in this country is the Democratic Party of the South. It has ruled the South for over half a century. In its early days it fought to keep Labor in perpetual slavery and to that end even forced upon this country a terrible civil war. Although it failed to keep Labor in chattel slavery, it has succeeded in keeping Labor in the worst political servitude and industrial wage-slavery that exist in this country. The Democratic Party of the South has disfranchised not only the mass of colored laborers, but even the mass of white laborers. And it is in the South that we find unemployed workers thrown into jail, put in the stockades, and hired to the employers in chain gangs. It is in the South that convicts are sent into the mines, the turpentine camps, the woods, and the cotton fields in the service of private capital and in competition with free labor. In Birmingham, Alabama, one finds one mine of the steel trust worked by convicts and an adjoining mine worked by free labor. Both mines are competing with each other, and the employers use the convict labor to beat down the wages of the free. And when the free labor struck, it was a Democrat, Governor Cromer, of Alabama, who sent the state militia to cut down the tents of the striking miners and to drive them from the hillsides where they were encamped. Nor is this antagonism to union labor limited to the Democrats of the South. Ask the United Mine Workers what they think of the Democratic Party and its treatment of them in Colorado and Michigan? The Governor of Michigan, during the recent great copper strike, and the Governor of Colorado during the recent great coal strike were loyal Democrats. And it was President Cleveland, a Democrat, who turned the Federal Government over to the

railroads in 1894 to break the great strike of the American Railway Union. That was, of course, some time ago, but the acts of Governors Ammons, Ferris, and Cromer in recent years are perhaps as inimical to Labor as those of the worst public officials in Russia. All of them allowed both the private thugs of the mine-owners and the state militia to use machine guns and to murder in cold blood workingmen, women, and children. Yet these are Democrats and powerful men in the party whom Mr. Gompers and the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. ask Labor to support.

There is one other point, perhaps even more important, that should be considered. The Democratic Party has been in control of the states of the South for nearly half a century, yet there is no civilized country in the world that is so backward in legislation for the benefit of Labor. There is not a Republican state in the Union nor a single European country that has so few labor laws as the Southern states. As an actual fact, the labor laws of Russia are superior to those of the South. Well, who is responsible for this condition, if not the Democratic Party? Has that party a single excuse to offer? It has been in absolute control of the Southern states. It has had practically no opposition in those states since the Civil War. It has had complete power to do anything it desired, and yet here is the indelible record—total neglect of all labor legislation, not even compulsory education for the children, nor adequate laws to prevent child labor. Many of our Northern states are twenty years behind Europe; but the South is fifty years behind Europe and decades behind even Russia. With such facts, which cannot be denied,—facts known even to Mr. Gompers,—how is it possible that he, of all persons, should urge Labor to support the Democratic Party? It is not difficult to agree with Mr. Gompers that the Republican Party is just as bad

or worse. On more than one occasion he has shown convincingly enough that the leaders of the Republican Party have not only insulted him personally, but that they have also turned a deaf ear to Labor during all the long years in which they were dominant in Congress. No one can be surprised that he should desire to defeat the Republicans. But is the support of the Democratic Party the only choice left to Labor? No doubt the Republican devil is as black as Mr. Gompers paints him. But is there left nothing to Labor but suicide in the Democratic deep sea?

To one who is ignorant or chooses to overlook these facts, or to one without any definite or well-thought-out economic or political principles, the methods of the A. F. of L. may appear both sane and effective because they seem almost identical with those used by the N. A. M. When well staged in the halls of a labor or of a manufacturers' congress, the dramas of Capital and Labor rewarding their friends and punishing their enemies leave little to be desired. Neither the manufacturers nor the labor men claim to be partisan. Van Cleave, Schwedtman, and the rest declare in many letters and interviews that they have no especial affection for the Republican Party; that they would just as soon support Democrats. On the other hand, the labor men sing the same song. They have no love for the Democratic Party. Both labor men and manufacturers merely declare that they will support their friends. For instance, these words of Mr. Van Cleave sound very much like those of Mr. Gompers:

"I am not tied to the Republican party nor is the National Association of Manufacturers. The association is not in politics. It never has been in politics, and it is safe to say that it never

will be. Some of its members will vote for Mr. Bryan, others of them will support Mr. Taft."*

And it is a fact that the manufacturers fought Republicans like Senator McComas and Congressman Pearre, of Maryland, longer and more bitterly than they fought Democrats like Senator Hughes. Although the manufacturers fought on the whole for the Republican Party, they also gave support to Southern Democrats and many Northern Democrats who had proved themselves friendly to the manufacturers.

However, some of them were of the opinion that the time would come when the Democratic Party would be controlled by Labor and Socialism, while the Republican Party would become the party of the moneyed interests. Schwedtmann, the Secretary to the President of the N. A. M., wrote October 10, 1908:

"I believe that in every campaign hereafter the labor agitators will have to be reckoned with. I do not believe that Gompers will ever lead another labor campaign. In four years the Socialists will have taken complete control of the American Federation of Labor. In a few years more they will also have taken complete control of the whole Democratic party, and then the real struggle will begin, a struggle that all European nations have been fighting now for many years. I predict that in eight years from now we will have in Congress more than two dozen Socialistic Representatives. I know that that may look ridiculous to you, and I believe it does to Mr. Van Cleave. You all think, and you have good reason for your thought, that I am rather a pessimist and a crank on this question of Socialism, but you all have not seen it grow under your every eyes the way I have in Europe. I shall be delighted to find in the end that our country is different from others, as far as the growth of Socialism is concerned, but I cannot see why the history of the United States in that regard should not repeat the history of Germany, France, Belgium, Denmark, and even England. * * * The Socialistic is the only one among the present minor parties that is built on a carefully planned foundation."†

*Maintenance of a Lobby to Influence Legislation; Hearings before a subcommittee of the Committee on the Judiciary, U. S. Senate, Appendix, p. 1906.

†*Idem*, App., p. 2163.

There is only one point in this interesting statement that need concern us here. Are there any tendencies today to indicate ~~that the Democratic Party~~ is to become the party of Labor? It is true that some of the officials of the A. F. of L. have in recent years attempted to consolidate the forces of Labor with the Democratic Party. At the same time the N. A. M. has been more and more consolidating its forces with the Republican Party. These facts undoubtedly have their importance. Nevertheless, it does not appear that Mr. Schwedtmann is justified in believing that the Democratic Party will ever become the party of Labor, or that the Republican Party will ever become the party of Capital. The Republican Party cannot afford to give up the labor vote, nor can it count always upon corrupting that vote to the extent that it has in the past. If it hopes to keep the support of Labor to any considerable degree, it will have to grant some concessions to Labor. On the other hand, the Democrats cannot afford to give up, nor will they for one instant consider giving up, the money of the manufacturers.' One of the most delightful side-lights on politics in the Mulhall papers appears in a letter of Mr. Parry to Mr. Van Cleave:

"Yesterday evening (August 25, 1908) I had a personal visit out at my place from Bryan, Kern and several other Democratic dignitaries * * * Bryan mentioned the skinning that you had given him, but in good-natured way. He said several pleasant things about you, but I could see that it was stinging him just the same."*

Two days before, Kern was notified of his nomination on the Democratic ticket as Vice-President, and Mr. Bryan was then the candidate for the Presidency on the same ticket. They had made terms with Mr. Gompers and they

*Maintenance of a Lobby to Influence Legislation, p. 1935.

were now seeking the friendship of the Manufacturers' Association, and even Mr. Bryan had many "pleasant things" to say of Mr. Van Cleave, the bitterest enemy that Labor has ever known. We see the same Mr. Facing-both-ways in Mr. Beveridge in his relations with Mr. Parry. When the chairman of the House Committee investigating Mulhall's disclosures asked Mr. David M. Parry: "Were you a personal friend of Senator Beveridge?" Mr. Parry answered: "A personal friend, and I got him his job in the Senate."* In fact, there is no professional politician in the country who is not doing everything in his power all the time to keep the friendship of the manufacturers for their money and the friendship of Labor for its votes. Neither the Republican nor the Democratic Party will ever take an openly antagonistic attitude toward either Capital or Labor. To be sure, when they see the labor vote leaving them, they will pass a few miserable laws in favor of Labor; but when they see the money leaving them, they will hasten pell-mell to do anything that Capital wants. This is absolutely inevitable, so long as we have two capitalist parties, with two sets of hungry office-seekers, fighting for power. There are thousands upon thousands of Democratic and Republican politicians who are, at bottom, more in sympathy with Labor than they are with Capital. But they are bound hand and foot. It takes millions upon millions of dollars to run political campaigns such as we have had in this country. And the capitalist parties must hire Mulhalls, corrupt tens of thousands of voters, own or bribe newspapers, and employ bands, halls, theaters, moving pictures, and a hundred other contrivances to get the vote. Consequently, they must

*Charges Against Members of the House and Lobby Activities, p. 2214.

above all things have money, and, to get money, they become secretly, if not openly, the bonded servant of Capital.

The fact is that the capitalists actually own, finance, and control the great political parties, and it is by virtue of that ownership and control that they are able now and always have been able to pass the laws and to obtain the government best suited to their ends. How, then, can Labor reward its friends or punish its enemies when it chooses its representatives from those selected by party bosses and party machines owned by Capital? Certainly, it is not going to hurt the capitalists to have their parties promise in their platforms measures in the interest of Labor. They have done that for fifty years without the least attempt to keep their pledges. Nor is it going to hurt them to have their parties occasionally pick up a trade-union leader and put him in office. A few such men in a great party cannot do any harm. In fact, they are pretty useful to the capitalist, in that it is only by the public platforms of the party and by the character of certain candidates that it is possible for any capitalist party to get the labor vote. This is, indeed, a part of its game; but every sane man knows that the capitalists own, finance, and control their parties to get for themselves the advantage of the laws and the protection of the government, not against some hidden, unknown, foreign foe, but against the labor movement itself. It is the labor movement and its determination to raise wages and improve the conditions of the masses that every capitalist fears. So long, then, as Labor, can be kept divided and its factions induced to fight each other instead of the common enemy, just so long will the powers of oppression keep Labor in helpless subjection both industrially and politically.

At times Mr. Gompers seems to see all this very clearly. For instance, testifying before the Industrial Commission of

1900, he declared that wealth "controls the political parties; it controls the avenues for advancement; it controls the State."* But, after having said that, he seems to lose his way, and he appears to believe that a workingman must vote as his employer wishes him to. One of the members of the Commission was apparently astonished that Mr. Gompers should say that wealth controls the political parties, and he said:

"Well, then, it must do it through somebody's weakness or corruption, since the people vote and their votes are counted?" To which Mr. Gompers answered: "A people who are economically dependent are not politically independent."†

"Then you mean to say," asked his questioner, "that when one man works for another, he must vote as his employer wishes him to?"

"Not necessarily; not theoretically; but practically that is nearly so, except where those employees are organized."‡

In these words Mr. Gompers presents a peculiar political philosophy, and in order that no one shall think them an unfair statement of his thought, I shall add here some memorable words of his, spoken at the Convention of the A. F. of L. in Denver in 1894:

"It is ridiculous to imagine that the wage workers can be slaves in employment and yet achieve control at the polls. There never yet existed coincident with each other autocracy in the shops and democracy in political life."§

This is perfectly clear. And there is no question that in the opinion of Mr. Gompers there can be no political democracy, Labor can obtain no equitable laws, and the workers must remain political slaves (although in the vast majority and with the vote in their hands) until they are industrially dominant. This surely presents a black outlook

*Report of Industrial Commission, 1900, Vol. VII, p. 656.

†*Idem*.

‡*Idem*, p. 656.

§Proceedings 1894 Convention, p. 14.

for Labor in the near future. And it is here, I think, that we find the fatal obstacle which has for over a quarter of a century blocked the path of Labor in America on political lines. It is surely obvious that Labor must either strike out on its own independent political lines and build up a party of its own, or it must play the game of its masters. Unless it has its own movement, it must continue to be a part of the movement owned and controlled by its opponents. This is a fatality that exists in the very logic of Mr. Gompers. It cannot be avoided if we accept the premises laid down by him, and the fact is, it has not been avoided, and for thirty-three years the labor movement has been driven hither and thither, abjectly helpless, as I have said before, between the devil and the deep sea. If there be logic in his thought, it is this, that Labor must forever serve as the slave to one or the other of the capitalist parties, until in some manner it first achieves industrial supremacy.

Mr. Gompers' epigram, that people who are economically dependent cannot be politically independent, reminds one of a phrase frequently used by Albert R. Parsons, the Chicago Anarchist: "Political liberty," he said, "without economic (industrial) freedom, is an empty phrase." This was also the view of Proudhon, Bakounin, and Kropotkin, the Anarchists of the old International, and it is now the position of the Syndicalists. The emphasis, of course, is laid upon the fact that economic freedom must precede political freedom. But it may be said with equal truth that men cannot be slaves in politics and free in the shops. Industrial freedom, without political liberty, is also "an empty phrase." Men cannot be industrially independent of their employers if they are politically dependent upon the tools of their employers. Men cannot be incorruptible in their trade unions if they are corruptible in politics. Moreover,

the corruptionists of the employers cannot be driven out of the industrial activities of the unions if they are fostered in the political activities of the unions. Men cannot wage a battle for freedom on the economic field and resign themselves to inaction on the political field. Men cannot be really intelligent who battle industrially for freedom and yet at every election vote into the hands of their enemy the power of the State, the control of the militia, of the courts, and of all the powers of government. One might continue indefinitely striking off such well-sounding phrases; but they would mean very little. The fault in the argument of Mr. Gompers is simply the fact that you can state his proposition forward or backward with equal force. To refuse to bow to the authority of the employers in the shops is to set up a measure of independence. But even that is vitiated, if not destroyed, when Labor immediately afterward follows them abjectly to the polls. Industrial independence, when it can be achieved, is excellent, but to overturn it all by political servitude is to violate the spirit of the modern labor movement. Fortunately, it is no longer worth while discussing this question, because the history of the European labor movement of the last quarter century definitely proves that if Labor expects to attain any degree of real freedom, it must struggle in an organized manner, with equal determination against both political and industrial tyranny.

There are many striking historical instances to prove the truth of this contention. A notable case is one with which Mr. Gompers is familiar. In 1892 the National Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers had twenty-four thousand members in good standing. It had a leadership that believed firmly in the idea that big profits meant big wages, and that politically it should serve its employers. It left the American Federation of Labor at

one time, because the Federation removed a plank from its platform which advocated a protective tariff. It thought it could improve its position better by fighting with the bosses than by fighting with the labor movement. In the late eighties it sent delegates to Congress to plead for a protective tariff. It marched as a body for the Republican Party and passed numberless high-tariff resolutions and sent them to Congress. Some of the leaders of the Amalgamated Association spent more time trying to get a protective tariff and in electing a Republican administration than they spent in the affairs of their union. They carried out the political orders of the Carnegie Company, and, despite much burning of the fingers, they pulled the chestnuts out of the fire for that company. The tariff bill was passed, and the profits of the steel mills became immense, but the next winter a fence three miles long and twelve feet high, covered with barbed wire, was built about the work of Andrew. Three hundred Pinkertons were sent for and told to be armed ready for battle. The unions were then informed that there would be no increase in wages, and in midwinter the men were locked out. It is well enough known that that was the last time the employers ever dealt with a trade-union man in the steel mills. The unions were broken up and destroyed, the leaders were blacklisted, and driven out of Pennsylvania, and, although that is over twenty years ago, there is not, even today, any organization to speak of in the steel industry. These are the magnificent achievements of the Trade Unionists of the Amalgamated Association, who believed in political harmony between Capital and Labor!

An even more striking lesson may be drawn from the conditions in Colorado. Here a very singular situation exists. It is one of the few states in the Union where the wage-workers outnumber the voters of all other classes. If

they were actually to vote as a unit, they could control all the offices,—legislative, judicial, executive, and military. Probably nowhere else in this country are the workers so militant, and certainly nowhere else have there been so many strikes of a violent character. The industrial struggles of Colorado are almost universally referred to as labor wars. Yet the very men who have been fighting for “industrial freedom,” as Mr. Gompers calls it, have also been regularly voting their enemies into power. When the People’s Party was an independent party, the workers actually elected all the state officials and had many extremely warm friends, if not direct representatives, in control of the government. They had such vigorous, independent, and virile men as Governor Davis H. Waite, who at all times fought on the side of Labor. But since that party lost its independence and fused with the Democrats, the Trade Unionists of Colorado have been hopelessly divided. They have elected both the Democrats and Republicans to office, only to be deceived and betrayed. Even after their great labor wars of ten years ago, they did not fight a straight-out battle against both the capitalist parties. On the contrary, some of them fought for the Democrats, others for the Republicans, with invariable defeats for Labor. The result of such political harmony between Capital and Labor is today shown in the Ludlow massacres, in the control of the militia by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and in the frightful Russianized political conditions that make it possible for privately hired gunmen to murder without penalty American citizens. Exactly the same conditions now face the coal miners under the Democratic Governor Ammons that faced the metal miners under the Republican Governor Peabody. It is difficult to believe that if Labor continues such political policies it can continue to win in the future even its strikes.

In any case, it is the political weakness of Labor that is forcing its industrial struggles to become civil wars. What it has failed to do with its votes it is forced to do with rifles and with dynamite, and there, too, it fails.

There is still another instance worthy of notice. We have already mentioned it briefly in dealing with the Mulhall testimony. It will be remembered that David M. Parry, one of the bitterest enemies of the labor movement, sought, in 1908, to make James E. Watson Governor of Indiana. He was a pliable tool of the manufacturers, and had for years been one of their paid agents. It was natural and necessary that he should be fought by the A. F. of L., and Mr. Gompers and his friends went into the state to defeat Watson. Although there are tens of thousands of union men in Indiana, all that the manufacturers needed to do in order to counteract the presence of Mr. Gompers and the work of several of his ablest assistants was to import Martin Mulhall. The story of his work is now fully told. Martin began to corrupt the labor movement. He immediately employed a hundred or more trade-union leaders, and a few nights before election an immense torchlight procession of workmen, Trade Unionists and others, marched to the music of Martin and sang hallelujahs for Jim Watson. Parry stood back of the scenes and must have been enormously amused as he watched thirty thousand workmen marching for the manufacturers. Many of these workmen were enthusiastic Trade Unionists who thought they were fighting for industrial freedom, but, by some curious logic like that of Mr. Gompers, they were convinced that they could only fight Parry by starving themselves for months upon a strike. In their unions they had declared war on the manufacturers, their association, their agents, their spies, their blackmailers, and their corruptionists, yet

here they were marching in politics, side by side with them! Lighted by the torches of the manufacturers, lined up by the marshals of the manufacturers, and boozed by the liquor of the manufacturers, they voted, like so many abject slaves, for the men and measures demanded by the manufacturers.

These instances of Labor's subservience to the capitalists in politics, while seeking freedom from them in their unions, are replete with lessons for the labor movement. Is it possible, if these activities continue, that the unions of the Federation can hope to escape the destruction which overcame the steel workers of Andrew Carnegie? Can the workers allow the Mulhalls to run their politics and keep them from destroying their unions? Can they let the agents of Parry, of Carnegie, and of Rockefeller into their unions to do political work, and keep them out of the unions when a strike is on and men are battling for their very lives? It matters not how we look at it or what views and theories we hold. It matters not where our sympathies lie. The fact is that no reasoning intelligent person can come to any other conclusion than this, that if the trade unions are the servants of the Parrys in politics, they will be incapable of fighting the Parrys in strikes. If workingmen cannot be politically free while remaining industrial slaves, it is equally impossible that they shall be industrially free while remaining political slaves. Labor can succeed only when both its political and industrial organizations are completely independent of capitalist influences. It can succeed only when it has driven from its midst every agent of the manufacturers, every tool of the political bosses, and every man who seeks to connect it, through treasonable and corrupting alliances, with the movements and organizations of its opponents.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FAILURE OF LABOR IN AMERICAN POLITICS.

The most vital and practical question involved in this discussion is whether or not the political methods of the American Federation of Labor are likely to attain the ends sought. While the previous discussion has doubtless indicated that those methods are by no means a success, there are certain facts which demonstrate indubitably that the methods of the American Federation of Labor are not only attended by serious evils, but that they are also a complete failure. Not only are they employed at immense cost to the labor movement in time, men, and money, but they are incapable of producing any results of value. They neither materially advance the interests of Labor now, nor give the slightest promise of aiding the emancipation of Labor in the future.

In order that no assertion shall be made without positive proof, let us see what legislation the American Federation of Labor demanded in 1881 and what it has succeeded in obtaining. I have already told that at its first annual convention it made thirteen definite legislative demands. They seemed then of pressing importance. Well, let us see what thirty-three years of political effort on the part of the A. F. of L. have accomplished. The first demand was for the passage of laws by Congress and the state legislatures for the incorporation of trade unions. This was never obtained, and in recent years the officials of the Federation have been opposed to it. The second demand was for compulsory education. Laws of this character have been passed in

most of the Northern States, but in the South there are as yet no adequate laws of this character. The third demand was for the prohibition of the employment of children under fourteen years of age. Such laws have been passed in most of the states, although a few Southern states hang back.

These are gains, but it is surely unnecessary to point out that both the compulsory education laws and the child-labor laws have been passed largely through the efforts of philanthropic societies. The fourth demand was for uniform apprentice laws, to insure that young workers should be properly trained in the shops and thoroughly taught a trade. Such uniform apprentice laws have not been passed. The fifth demand was for a national eight-hour law. If this means eight hours for government employes, such a law has been passed. If it means a national eight-hour law for all workers it has, of course, not been obtained.* The sixth demand was for the abolition of the contract system of prison labor. This has been obtained in a few states. However, throughout the entire South and in many states of the North, the prisoners in our great penitentiaries are still sold on contract to the manufacturers. The seventh demand was for the abolition of the "truck" system of payment. Such laws have been obtained in several Northern states. But the Colorado labor war of 1914 was undertaken partly to force the mine owners of that state to pay the men in cash. The eighth demand was for mechanics' lien laws. Such laws have been obtained in many states. The ninth demand was for the repeal and erasure from the statute books of all acts known as conspiracy laws. This has been accomplished

*To the astonishment of many, Mr. Gompers and the A. F. of L. went on record last year (1914) as opposed to the effort to obtain by legislation a national eight-hour day for adult male workers.

in some states. The tenth demand was for a national bureau of labor statistics. That has been obtained, and; furthermore, the head of the Department of Labor is now a member of the President's Cabinet. The eleventh demand was for laws to give the laboring men of this country full protection against the cheap labor of foreign countries. If that means a protective tariff, it has been obtained not by Labor, but by Capital. If it means the restriction of immigration to this country, it has, of course, not been obtained. Probably twenty million immigrants have arrived in this country since 1881. The twelfth demand was for the passage of a law to prevent the importation of foreign laborers under contract. This was obtained, but Trade Unionists on strike have had on many occasions to complain that this law is not enforced. The thirteenth item in the platform urged all trade unions and labor organizations to send workingmen into the law-making bodies of the country. Although there are now over two million, five hundred thousand Trade Unionists in America, there are only a handful of "card men" in the various legislative bodies throughout the country. Such are the results of the political methods of the American Federation of Labor after thirty-three years.

In Mr. Gompers' report to the Tenth International Federation of Trade Unions, he speaks in detail of the "great national legislative gains made by Labor in 1912." Among these he mentions the following: The manufacture of white phosphorous matches has been prohibited; a physical valuation law for steam railroads and express companies was passed; a parcels post law was passed; a law establishing a Children's Bureau was passed; an amendment to the national Constitution providing for an income tax was ratified by three-fourths of the states, while still another amendment to the national Constitution was passed and rati-

fied providing for the popular election of United States Senators. Mr. Gompers speaks of these laws as labor victories, but surely it is impossible by any stretch of the imagination to place these gains to the credit of the American Federation of Labor. Two of them were obtained through the efforts of philanthropic organizations, while the other laws were almost entirely the result of general agitation in which all classes of citizens and a multitude of capitalist newspapers and capitalist organizations were combined. Without wishing to diminish whatever credit may be due to the Federation for proposing or to its able legislative agents for assisting in the passage of any one or all of these useful and important laws, they are certainly not on the statute books because of Labor's advocacy.

That statement may seem a bit strange. But the fact is that in the last twenty years many reform organizations have been forced to do here for Labor what unhappily Labor has failed to do for itself. Many wealthy and generous people in America have felt deeply the wrongs done to certain classes of labor. They have been told of babes working in the mills, of terrible accidents in industry, of the frightful diseases of the wretched beings who make phosphorous matches, and of the many factory hands who die of tuberculosis. They have organized and supported a National Child Labor Committee, National Associations for Labor Legislation, for Prevention of Tuberculosis, for Housing Reform, and for abolition of convict labor. They have raised and spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in the attempt to make known the facts and to bring pressure to bear upon our legislative bodies to pass remedial laws. It will do Labor no harm frankly to admit that these reformers have in recent years forced the passage of many labor laws. On the contrary, it should shame Labor into greater activity,

especially if it will but realize that what these philanthropic societies have done here the labor parties have done abroad. And while such legislative measures are of value, no matter from what source they come, the fact that the conditions of labor have grown so bad here as to arouse even the capitalists to demand certain reforms, is additional evidence of the political weakness of the American labor movement. Every such measure is a form of charity, which stands as a mute witness to Labor's helplessness; and, rather than boast of the alms we receive, we should be humiliated that Labor did not itself obtain these and other similar measures of relief through its own power. Nothing could be more self-deluding and injurious to the labor movement than to boast of strength that it has not and of victories that others have won. To do this is to delay indefinitely awakening a consciousness of our weakness. It is to prolong our helplessness and to postpone that time when we shall develop in ourselves and in our organizations self-reliance, independence, and actual political power.

A fairer test of Labor's political power is the success it has had in obtaining legislation without the aid of philanthropic societies. What success, for instance, has it had in obtaining those measures that have been urged by it alone? Here we have an absolute test of Labor's strength. One measure which might be mentioned is the erasure and repeal from the statute books of the conspiracy laws; and another the outlawing of private armies, gunmen and detectives, as now used in almost every strike. There are few philanthropists to be found to support a law abolishing the agencies which now supply to employers spies, thugs, gunmen, and even private armies. There may be some, but there are not many, and when Labor expects relief from the conspiracy laws or protection from "hireling assassins,"—

as Judge Pryor once called them—it must fight for that relief and protection alone and unaided. As a matter of fact, it has fought alone and unaided for thirty years or more. In 1886 the American Federation of Labor declared for the abolition of Pinkertons; but on the day this book goes to press, the Pinkertons and those who have copied their method of doing business are still active at the old stand.

Although the Federation demanded in 1881 the repeal of all acts known as conspiracy laws, it was worse off after it had labored for ten years than when it began, by reason of the passage of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. For twenty-four years now prison has faced Trade Unionists who walked the streets for peaceful picketing, or resolved that they would not buy a certain make of hats. Such apparently innocent acts have indeed been worse than a crime since those who have done such things in violation of an injunction have been denied even trial by jury. In the past the workers have not been able to protect their lives and welfare by the employment of even such innocent weapons, although the employers can and do boycott union labor year in and year out, and employers can and do picket the houses of strikers with detectives, and employers have occasionally hired assassins to shoot men who shout "scab." These rights are permitted the employers because they are said to be in defence of property, but the far more innocent and harmless weapons pleaded for by the workers have been denied them, although they are in the interest of life. In this manner Trade Unionists have been treated for years as outlaws, and, according to decisions of the courts, they *are* actually outlaws.

This was a vitally serious situation and nothing was of greater concern to the trade-union movement than to change these laws which threatened its very existence. Not

only Mr. Gompers but every intelligent labor leader saw in these legal assaults upon the unions a real menace to American labor. As late as 1913 Mr. Gompers declares that the trade unions "exist by sufferance"; that Trade Unionists "can be criminally prosecuted and imprisoned for a year and fined the sum of \$5,000. They can be proceeded against in that way by any employer or business man who can show that he has suffered loss in his business through the normal activities of working people, * * * and threefold damages may be claimed and obtained."*

He also points out that the trade unions have been sued by the Buck Stove & Range Company for \$750,000 damages, that some women in Philadelphia have been sued for fifty thousand dollars, because they sought to improve the condition of the shirtwaist makers. He also points out that the hatters of Connecticut have been sued for eighty thousand dollars, and that the courts have allowed the employers damages of threefold that amount, that is to say, about \$240,000. After summarizing the various legal assaults upon the American trade-union movement, he repeats: "I said we are subject to sufferance. We exist by the sufferance of the government."† This is the situation which has faced, in some manner, the American labor movement for over thirty-three years. While I have been in the process of writing this book the Sherman Anti-Trust Act has been amended. The Clayton law was passed in October, 1914. As it appears to be merely an amendment of the Sherman Law, it is probable that the trade unions will be put back just where they were in 1881 under the Common Law, except in those states where by statute picketing and boycotting are permitted and trade unions are not considered conspiracies in restraint of trade. As to the value of the Clay-

*Charges Against House Members and Lobby Activities, 1913, p. 2518.

†*Idem*, p. 2519.

ton Law, it is as yet too early to speak. A prominent lawyer, whom I have consulted, has refused to give me an opinion on what Labor is likely to gain by it, as everything depends, he tells me, on the decisions of the courts. It should, however, be pointed out that while the trade unions may now escape prosecution under the Sherman Anti-Trust law, they will still be badgered and tormented by the various state laws. It is in the states that the Trade Unionists must battle for their freedom. If they desire to boycott and to picket, they must repeal or revise the conspiracy laws of the states. It is when we consider the progress of the A. F. of L. in the individual states that we are forced to the conclusion that it has made little headway in the last thirty-three years. Three states, Maryland, California, and Oklahoma, have laws fashioned after the English law of 1875. And while the British workers have gone far ahead of this in their Trades Disputes Act of 1906, the law of 1875 will still be considered by an American as enormously progressive. The Maryland law (of 1884) provides that the ordinary trade-union activities shall not be considered a crime and that Trade Unionists shall not be penalized criminally for the so-called acts of conspiracy. However, this law does not prevent damage suits or injunctions against boycotting and peaceful picketing. The laws of California (1903) and of Oklahoma (1907-8) are also modeled after the British law of 1875. The courts, however, have decided that the California law does not legalize peaceful picketing, though curiously enough the courts in the same state have held that boycotting is legal. The Oklahoma statute has not yet been construed by the Supreme Court of that state.

Five states—New Jersey, Texas, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Kansas—have attempted by law to legalize the efforts of workmen to persuade peaceably their fellow

workers to leave employment or to refrain from entering employment. The courts of New Jersey have, however, destroyed by their interpretation the value of the New Jersey law. The Texas law is badly drawn and in a serious battle would afford Trade Unionists no protection. While individuals may picket, it is doubtful if a union would be allowed to combine, or, as the courts would say, conspire to picket. The Massachusetts laws, passed in 1913-4, appear to be a real gain for Labor, and unless the courts find ground to destroy them they would seem to have completely legalized peaceful picketing. The New Hampshire law is similar to the Texas law and is probably of little value. The Kansas law does not legalize peaceful picketing, but provides that it may not be prohibited in injunctions. The Pennsylvania law is a dead letter and has not prevented any court in that state from prohibiting boycotting, peaceful picketing and peaceful persuasion. The Colorado laws have recently been altered. There is now a statute making boycotting and picketing a penal offence. It is pretty clear from this brief summary that the A. F. of L. has on the whole miserably failed in its efforts to revise or repeal the conspiracy laws. It would appear, then, that Labor has not yet been able either to outlaw the murderous weapons of its enemies, such as the use of gunmen and thugs, nor has it anywhere been able, except possibly in Massachusetts, to legalize its own more honorable weapons. Consequently, in most states Trade Unionists are not able even today to picket and boycott without being threatened with prison.

Consider for a moment that the trade-union movement of America is at least a hundred years old. It was a powerful movement before anything like it existed in any other country except England. The trade unions of England and America are the oldest of modern labor movements. As

early as 1830 Labor in this country was achieving great things, in raising wages, reducing hours, improving the conditions in the shop, and in actually manifesting a vigorous political power. It was many decades later before the Latin, the Scandinavian, and the Teutonic countries had labor movements and exercised any power through them. We had a long start, and there can be no question that the labor movement in the English-speaking countries should be by far the most powerful and influential in the entire world. Why, is it, then, that Mr. Gompers should have to testify:

*"We are, in the United States, not less than two decades behind many of the European countries in the protection of the life, health, and limb of the workers."**

"We are behind England ten years; we are behind Germany twenty years."†

Why should we be twenty years behind Germany in labor legislation and decades behind "*many*" countries of Europe? Can there be any other reason for our falling behind in the labor movement of the world than the fact that our political methods are at fault and have been at fault for years? Had we pursued the same political methods as the European labor movement, should not we today have been abreast of Europe in labor legislation, in social reform, and in other great efforts to ameliorate the miserable conditions of our economic life? Have we been less well situated than the countries of Europe? Can our industries, our wealth, our national resources less well afford the expense of protecting the life, limb, and health of the workers? Are our workers less intelligent, less well-schooled than those of Europe? Have they less political power in their hands?

*Charges Against Members of the House and Lobby Activities of the National Association of Manufacturers of the U. S. and Others, 1913, p. 2532. Italics mine.

†*Idem*. Italics mine.

Have they more difficult conditions to contend with, more oppression to fight, more enemies to encounter? In all such matters we are actually far better off than the workers of Europe. What possible reason, then, can be given for our backwardness in labor legislation except the one here mentioned, that the political methods of the A. F. of L. are at fault? Sooner or later we must face the truth, that they are now, and have been for thirty years and more, a tragic failure. I shall let Mr. Gompers' own testimony stand in full support of that unfortunate truth.

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[There are, as it appears to me, certain main reasons for the failure of the political methods of the A. F. of L. First, no two persons in the Federation agree as to what those methods are. Second, the methods do not succeed in electing to office efficient representatives of Labor who remain faithful to Labor. Even when "card men" are elected to office, they have not the political independence necessary to enable them to fight vigorously the battles of Labor. They owe allegiance to capitalist parties, political bosses, and individual financial backers to such a degree that they are forced, sooner or later, either to betray Labor or to relinquish any ambition they may have for a successful political career. Third, the methods do not develop self-reliance, independence, and integrity in the labor movement. Instead of weaning the working class from its bondage to the capitalist parties, they fasten more and more securely the chains which bind it to those parties. They violate the spirit of Trade Unionism, and, while Labor struggles for industrial freedom, these methods force it to remain in political slavery. In the corruption of men, in the loss of leaders, in the betrayal of Labor, in the suspicion and distrust engendered among the rank and file, in the weakening of the class spirit, and in the undermining of class solidarity, the

political methods of the American Federation of Labor are so demoralizing that in time they may actually ruin the trade-union movement itself.

Let us now consider these matters in detail. No method that seeks the co-operation of millions can hope to be successful unless it is clearly understood by those millions. When men are called upon to act in concert, there must be some plan devised by which they can act in concert. They must understand what to do, and how to do it. The political methods of the A. F. of L. fail because, in the first place, there is no clear understanding among the Trade Unionists themselves as to what the political policy of the A. F. of L. is. Some Trade Unionists will tell you that it is the policy of the A. F. of L. to disregard politics altogether. They will claim that it is a law of the organization to keep all politics out of the unions. Others will tell you that discussions concerning politics are not out of place in the unions, but rather that it is the avowed historic policy of the A. F. of L. to endorse any party that stands for the rights of Labor, and that it is the duty of all union men to work enthusiastically for their friends and to endeavor in every manner to defeat their enemies. According to this view, every trade union should at each election take a stand in favor of this or of that political party and its candidates. Others again will maintain that only Trade Unionists, nominated by the various parties, shall receive the endorsement and support of the unions. Mr. Gompers has again and again been called upon to explain his position, but either it is so incoherent as to be incomprehensible, or it is so subtle and indefinable as to make it mysterious and confusing to the entire rank and file of the labor movement. No one, I think, will dispute that methods which promote such confusion as this must inevitably be a failure.

In any case, the Federation politically appears to be in complete anarchy. It is partisan here, non-partisan there. In both places it is quarreling as to whether or not it should endorse any party, and, if so, which party and which candidates. It is Socialist in one place, Democratic in another, Republican in still another. According to the personal qualities and alliances of its leaders, it endorses candidates, financially supports parties, and generally does pretty much what it pleases, regardless of any thought of solidarity. The local Federations fight each other, and the unions within those local Federations fight each other. State Federations are often opposed to the national organization, as well as to each other. There is no harmony, no unity of action, no solidarity of movement. From the leaders down, everybody does just as he pleases in politics. Without collective action—which is everywhere the basis of Labor's power—how is it possible, then, for anyone to believe for a moment that by such methods the workers can achieve anything politically?

That many of the delegates to the American Federation of Labor do not themselves understand the political policies of the Federation was amusingly illustrated at the convention of 1906. Mr. Gompers declared in his presidential address of that year that the time had gone by for "watchful waiting," and he threatened the political parties that the workers would thereafter stand by their friends and

"administer a stinging rebuke to men or parties who are either indifferent, negligent or hostile."*

In this and in the following conventions he assailed the Republican Party. Here and elsewhere he urged the workers to vote for and support morally and financially the Democratic Party. To most persons this would appear to

*Report of Proceedings 1906 Convention, p. 33.

be in the nature of partisan politics. Yet when Mr. Victor Berger introduced the resolution that

"true labor politics can never be non-partisan;" that instead "it must always be partisan to labor;"*

Vice-President Duncan, who was then in the chair, declared the resolution out of order, since

"the laws governing this convention provide that party politics, whether they be Democratic, Republican, Socialist, Populist, Prohibition, or any other, shall have no place in the conventions of the American Federation of Labor."*

The chair was sustained by the convention, and Mr. Berger was actually declared out of order, although he said at the time that he was not seeking an endorsement for the Socialist Party by that body. On the other hand, it did not seem to occur to anybody that Mr. Gompers was violating the constitution of the Federation. Not even Mr. Berger protested, while the delegates as a whole apparently understood so little the political methods which they were supposed to have adopted, that no one saw any inconsistency in Mr. Gompers' action or any violation of Mr. Berger's rights when ruled out of order by Vice-President Duncan. "What is the Constitution among friends?" is supposed to have been the saying of an eminent Tammany politician. While it does not exactly apply in this case, the above incident shows in a rather amusing manner the confusion of thought which exists in the A. F. of L. The Socialist is made to toe the line. Almost before he has risen to speak he is often declared out of order, because it is thought that he may favor partisan politics. But the thousands in the trade unions who advocate the claims of the Republican, Democratic, and Progressive parties have apparently no idea that they transgress the laws of the organization. So

*Report of Proceedings 1906 Convention, p. 186.

far as one can gather from the proceedings of the A. F. of L., to be non-partisan is to be non-Socialist. To be obedient to the constitution is to oppose independent labor politics, and to be a partisan to Labor is to be out of order. Such lack of clear thinking is promoting political sterility in the A. F. of L.

To show the failure of the methods of the A. F. of L. to elect faithful men to office, nothing beyond the testimony of Mulhall would be necessary. However, here, too, I find the words of Mr. Gompers to the point. When questioned by a House committee of Congress regarding the political activities of the American Federation of Labor, Mr. Gompers recalled the fact that Congressman Charles E. Littlefield, of Maine, John J. Gardner, of New Jersey, Richard Bartholdt, of Missouri, and James T. McDermott, of Illinois, were all at first the friends of Labor. They not only introduced important labor bills, but they actually advocated nearly all the measures demanded by Labor. These men in the beginning had the confidence and support of the labor movement. Mr. Bartholdt was at one time a printer and a Trade Unionist. Mr. Gardner advocated an eight-hour bill, and upon Mr. Gompers' request Speaker Reed made him Chairman of the Committee on Labor in the House. Mr. McDermott was elected as a Trade Unionist, and Mr. Littlefield was one of the particular friends of Labor at the beginning of his political career. What happened to these men? It took only a few sessions of Congress to prove them unfaithful to Labor, and in the end they had actually to be opposed, and, in one or two cases, bitterly fought, by the Federation. Recall the facts given by Mulhall and ask if this has not been the experience of Labor with its "friends" not only in Congress but also in nearly every state in the Union.

I shall never forget the last talk I had with John McMackin, who was ten or more years ago the Labor Commissioner of New York State. In his young manhood John McMackin was a radical labor leader, of a type, I imagine, that was a credit to the labor movement,—intelligent, fearless, and eloquent. He took a powerful and active part in the big labor campaign which in 1886 centered about the personality of Henry George. He became one of the most prominent labor men in New York; but, as soon as the George movement passed away, John McMackin became an adherent of the old political machines. Personally he prospered, and in recognition of his services he was made Labor Commissioner. He was supposed to enforce the labor laws of the state, and I suppose there were few of his old labor friends who doubted that John would do his duty. In any case, he grew old in the service, but his hands were tied.

When I became chairman of the movement against child-labor in New York I saw McMackin frequently, in the effort to persuade him to enforce the law. Despite the fact that the law he was supposed to enforce prohibited the labor of children under fourteen years of age, there were thousands of children under that age at work. There were hundreds of children of five and six years of age at work; and I knew this, and John knew this. When we talked about it, the tears came to his eyes, as he told me how really helpless he was, and that if he enforced the law he would lose his job in forty-eight hours. He told me more than any muck-raker has ever written of the vile and impossible political conditions in New York State, and how, back of every political machine, were powerful corporations, which controlled the movements of the state officials as a player controls the movements of his puppets. It was a "Punch

and Judy" show. He and the other political servants were forced to do the bidding of the machine or be guillotined. And there he was, the product of twenty years of servitude, bound hand and foot, in the cell of a political machine. He shared the same passion that every labor man shares. He could not think of child labor without horror, but, despite the fact that babies were at work and that workmen and women were being mutilated, burned, and destroyed, because the laws he was supposed to enforce were not enforced, he sat there palsied. He tried to ease his conscience by mumbling to himself, "If I enforce the law I go to my destruction, and someone will be put in my place who will perhaps do even less than I can do." But all the time he knew that by not enforcing the law he was a traitor to his old comrades. And there, with old age creeping over him and death facing him, he sat a prisoner of machine politics, utterly helpless to change or alter one iota of their inexorable laws.

The fullness of the tragedy lies in the fact that the labor movement of America has not yet progressed beyond the stage of producing John McMackins. It takes its best and cleverest men and puts them in the prison-house of the capitalist machine. And, while no one can blame the capitalist for thus blocking and paralyzing the efforts of Labor, it is a lamentable spectacle to see the old game still being played by the trade unions. I have but little censure in my heart for these old labor men. In most cases they have been simply the products of a condition. They have been sacrificed on the altars of a policy that never had in it the slightest virtue. They had to live, and, once in the damnable game, all they could do was to make as much as possible out of it for their own wives and children. Their bread had to be buttered, and, when once they started along the

path of machine politics, their livelihood depended upon loyal service to the boss. There was no party of Labor to stand behind them when they fought for Labor, nor any working-class movement to employ them or to finance their campaigns. In most cases their only choice, after developing the luxurious habits of a politician, was to give up political jobs paying thousands a year, to drop out of politics altogether, and to return to their work at the bench at a few dollars a day. It was too much to expect of them that they should thus sacrifice themselves and the welfare of their wives and children, especially as the working people were neither politically organized nor capable of taking advantage of their skill.

I appeal to the Trade Unionists themselves and ask them if it is not true that the labor movement of this country has suffered terribly from this loss of its able men. Is it not almost invariably the case that as soon as any trade-union leader becomes identified with a capitalist party, he is very soon discredited and ruined as an influence in the labor movement? Thousands of the most brilliant of the younger men and many of the most capable labor leaders that have been known in any country have been lost to Labor in America, on account of political disorganization which has forced them in consequence to take part in the political game of their masters. Whether or not these leaders have been corrupt is of little consequence. In any case, all I am willing to say is that they have been lost to the labor movement. Among the notable men who once exercised a great power in the trade unions but who left them to become insignificant in politics, are John McBride, ex-President of the United Mine Workers; John Jarrett, ex-President of the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers; James R. Sovereign and T. V. Powderly, formerly

General Master Workmen of the Knights of Labor; Frank P. Sargent, formerly Grand Master of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen; Edwin C. Madden, of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen; B. B. Rae, of the Order of Railway Conductors; John W. Hayes, formerly General Secretary-Treasurer of the Knights of Labor; and Theodore Schaffer, ex-President of the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers. Most of these men will be remembered today, and the older Trade Unionists will know also Robert Schilling, of Milwaukee, and William C. Pomeroy, of Chicago. Scores of others might be mentioned, not to speak of those who promise today to follow in the footsteps of the above mentioned. I need only call to mind John Mitchell, ex-President of the United Mine Workers; Daniel J. Keefe, ex-President of the Longshoremen's Association; E. E. Clark, of the Railway Conductors; James Lynch, of the Typographical Union; Roady Kenehan, of the Horseshoers' Union; Elmer Greenawalt, former President of the Pennsylvania State Federation of Labor; William B. Wilson and Francis Feehan, of the Miners; and J. J. McArdle, of the Amalgamated Iron and Steel Workers. Some of these names are among those best known in the labor world of America. Only a few years have passed since these men occupied very high positions in the trade-union movement. Yet we find them, let us hope with some pangs of remorse, going into the service of the capitalist parties and accepting official positions where it will be utterly impossible for them to remain entirely faithful to Labor.

Contrast what these men might have been to the movement had there been such a Socialist party in this country as exists in Europe. Bebel, Liebknecht, Legien, Auer, and Baumeister, of Germany; Hardie, Barnes, Henderson,

Crooks, Thorne, of Great Britain; Greulich, of Switzerland; Branting, of Sweden; Hüber, of Austria—all these notable men and hundreds of others have been identified with the European labor movement since their childhood. As Socialists (and most of them as Trade Unionists also) they have fought for Labor all their lives. And, although many of them are now old men (and, of course, Bebel, Auer and Liebknecht are dead), they have fought in strikes and in parliament on the side of Labor against all capitalist parties, influences, and institutions. As against the many American labor leaders who have gone down and out, some of whose names are today not even remembered, and nowhere honored, by the labor movement,—we have these hundreds of European labor men whose names will never be forgotten. The English, German, Austrian, and other labor leaders of Europe are not fundamentally more honest than our men. They are not abler or more sincere in their devotion to Labor than our men. It is simply that they have two movements which occupy their whole time, and support them both industrially and politically in their fight for Labor. They can work for the labor movement both as Trade Unionists in strikes and as citizens at the polls, and in both battles they can remain true to Labor. Consequently, as they grow older they grow greater in the noblest cause of modern days. They are heroes worshiped by the multitude, and when one of them passes away hundreds of thousands follow him mournfully to the grave—as they did Liebknecht and Bebel.

If the absence of a powerful party of labor has a deplorable effect upon the more prominent trade-union leaders, it has a far more deplorable effect upon the minor leaders. It is clear from Mulhall's testimony that the very men who were selling themselves to the political bosses at

election time were also selling themselves to the manufacturers in nearly every strike. I have mentioned many such cases, but the following extract from one of Mulhall's letters to Van Cleave is interesting:

"The machinists' strike is about over here, and the men are all going back. * * * There are several of my old-time political friends that belong to the Gompers organization that have pledged me that they would let up on Cowles' shop, so I will leave here tonight * * *

They had their price. Their names and addresses were treasured by both the political and industrial bosses. Whenever Labor was making a fight, these men were sought out and bought. It was their ambition to become the guiding spirits of the labor movement, in order that the price of their perfidy should be higher. Whenever a Republican, a Democrat, or a Progressive was hunting votes, or a manufacturer was breaking strikes, or a detective agency was seeking spies and wanted men to do the dirty work, these venal Trade Unionists were sought out. They are a type of "workmen" familiar enough to their fellows. They rarely work at their trades but spend most of their time hanging around the saloons. Sometimes they are up, sometimes they are down. But it usually happens that whenever strikes break out, or the election period arrives, these men have money to spend. They are parasites on the movement, who are a perpetual disgrace to the name of Labor. Their fellow Trade Unionists suspect them, but it is hard to get evidence of the treachery of such men. And there they are and remain, used by the employers and the political machines to betray the cause of the workers and to break, in every critical struggle, the solidarity of Labor. That men of this type exist in every movement is beyond question.

*Maintenance of a Lobby to Influence Legislation, App., p. 975.

No organization can hope to eliminate them altogether, but what I am asking here is this, does not the present political policy of the American Federation of Labor breed a superabundance of such men? Does not the continuance of its present policy mean money in their pockets? These men, of course, demoralize the movement. They spread suspicion and distrust among the rank and file, and at every critical moment turn the scale to the injury of Labor.

And that is not all. They give to the outside world an altogether false impression of the movement. The employers and political leaders rarely see the ablest, most trustworthy, and most faithful trade union officials, but they do see a great deal of this scum of the movement, that is constantly attending upon them in the hope of a hand-out. Of course, the labor movement can never expect to be admired by the employers, and, perhaps, it is better that its leaders should care little what opinions the employers may have of them. Yet, even in the struggle of the classes, there is no reason why the leaders on both sides should not respect each other's character and integrity. One who knows the labor movement is astonished occasionally to hear broadminded and liberal employers declaring that all labor leaders can be bought; but upon a little investigation it will be discovered that their acquaintance with labor leaders is limited to these hangers-on, these street-walkers of Labor. On the other hand, if one speaks to an English or German employer about the character of the Labor and Socialist leaders, one will almost without exception hear something like this: "Their views are dangerous; I have no sympathy with their principles; but they are men of high character with an unselfish devotion to their cause." Why is it that in America one so rarely hears a similar sentiment? No one who knows the American labor movement will doubt

that most of its leaders are as disinterested, as clean, and as devoted to the cause of Labor as those of any other country in the world. But it also has hundreds of these hangers-on, these go-betweens, whom Mulhall used, and who are absolutely unknown to any movement in Europe. They are purely an American product, and their existence cannot be explained on any other grounds than that the political boss has been invited to enter the American labor movement, and, where he comes with his money, havoc and ruin follow.

The uses in politics for these hangers-on of the labor movement are numerous and varied. They are called upon to do the lowest kind of political work. And, in reward for their services, it is not uncommon to see these so-called labor men appointed to the lowest order of political office. When the political bosses want to nominate Trade Unionists for the legislatures, they, of course, select men of a distinctly higher type, but even then they prefer those who are either corrupt enough to be swayed in all cases by the boss, or loyal enough to the political machine to abide at all times by the will of that machine. Not infrequently, in strong labor districts, the bosses pit one Trade Unionist against another in an election. Of course, any such game as this plays directly into the hands of the political bosses, and it is one which they have already used with considerable effect. One notable case occurs to me. I have told that the manufacturers of Maryland were very eager a few years ago to defeat Congressman George A. Pearre, who, although not a Trade Unionist, had been particularly active in Congress in promoting legislation favorable to Labor. The move of the manufacturers, which succeeded, was to get a Trade Unionist, a prominent labor man, to run against Congressman Pearre. By this simple manœuvre the

policy of the Federation of Labor was paralyzed, and, when Mr. Morrison, the Secretary, was asked what the Federation did in that case, he had to answer that it did not interfere, that it kept out of the contest.* However, the result of such a situation is invariably this: when two Trade Unionists of two different parties are fighting each other, the Trade Unionist who has, in addition to his personal popularity, the backing and support of powerful financial interests, must succeed at the polls. This is exactly what has happened in many states of the Union, notably in Wisconsin, not to speak of Colorado, where Governor Ammons and at least some of his union comrades were backed successfully by a corrupt political machine and supported financially by the mine owners of the state.

In both Colorado and Pennsylvania the labor movement has been particularly active in politics, and it is a rather curious coincidence that in these two states Labor has suffered most. The methods used to deal with Labor in both states resemble those used in Russia. In both places union men have had to fight many bloody battles to maintain an organized existence. Men, women, and children have been ridden under foot by mounted men; machine guns have torn to pieces their cabins and their tents. Yet in nearly every election it is common to find prominent Trade Unionists running on the Democratic or Republican ticket. Hundreds of trade-union men have been elected to office in Pennsylvania as Democrats or Republicans, and a very similar situation has existed for over twenty years in the State of Colorado. In the old Populist days Labor was very influential in Colorado, while even within the last few years

*Charges Against Members of the House and Lobby Activities, 1913, p. 2551.

trade-union men have occupied some of the most important official positions in the state. I recall, for instance, a statement sent out from Mr. Gompers' office after the elections of 1912. It spoke of the remarkable work done by the Trade Unionists in Colorado, of the laws that had been passed through their efforts, and of the fact that they were making a political record that was unparalleled. According to the authority of the officials of the American Federation of Labor, the following Trade Unionists were in control of that state in 1912-1914. I give the list just as it was sent out at the time by the A. F. of L. Press Service.*

Elias Ammons,	Farmers' Union,	Governor,	Dem.
Benj. Montgomery,	Farmers' Union,	Lieut.-Gov.,	Dem.
James B. Pearde,	R. R. Telegraphers' U.,	Secy. of State,	Dem.
Roady Keuchan,	Horseshoers' Union	State Auditor,	Dem.
Mary C. C. Bradford,	Woman's Tr. U. League,	Supr. Pub. Inst.,	Dem.
Edward Keating,	Typographical Union,	Congressman,	Dem.
Joseph Berry,	Locomotive Engineers,	State Senator,	Dem.
H. E. Garman,	Typographical Union,	State Senator,	Dem.
S. S. Bellesfield,	Typographical Union,	State Senator,	Dem.
Ralph Tucker,	Trainmen's Union,	State Senator,	Rep.
William Metz,	Conductors' Union,	State Senator,	Dem.
John Cross,	Farmers' Union,	State Senator,	Dem.
John I. Tobin,	Farmers' Union,	State Senator,	Dem.
John I. Tierney,	Typographical Union,	State Senator,	Dem.
Mat. Lynes,	Locomotive Engineers,	State Senator,	Rep.
Joe Hurd,	Mine Workers' Union,	State Senator,	Dem.
John Williams,	Bookbinders' Union,	House of Rep.,	Dem.
Phil McCarthy,	Stationary Engineers,	House of Rep.,	Dem.
Mrs. Lee,	Wife Union Machinist,	House of Rep.,	Dem.
William R. Elmore,	Machinists' Union,	House of Rep.,	Dem.
Charles J. Leftwich,	Carpenters' Union,	House of Rep.,	Dem.
Onias Skinner,	Farmers' Union,	House of Rep.,	Dem.
Peter Turnbull,	Metal Miners' Union,	House of Rep.,	Dem.
Jack Stattery,	Hotel & Restaur. Emp.,	House of Rep.,	Dem.
John T. Kavanaugh,	Street Carmen's Union,	House of Rep.,	Dem.
William Daily,	Typographical Union,	House of Rep.,	Dem.
A. C. Newton,	Typographical Union,	House of Rep.,	Rep.
— McDonald,	Machinists' Helpers' U.,	House of Rep.,	Dem.

According to this information, the Executive officials, ten state Senators, and twelve members of the House of Representatives of Colorado, are all closely identified with union labor. Elected as Democrats mainly, they were supposed to be labor representatives, owing heavy obligations to the labor movement. It would seem from this that the

*The Minnesota Union Advocate, November 22, 1912.

political achievements of labor in Colorado very nearly approach the ideal of Mr. Gompers. He can hardly hope that for many years to come the labor movement in other states will be able to elect to office more state officials of the highest standing. The situation in Colorado would seem to be the culmination of all Mr. Gompers' political efforts, yet, incredible as it may seem, it is in Colorado, more or less dominated politically by Democratic Trade Unionists, that the most frightful massacre of working men, women and children that has been known in recent years has just occurred. The facts of that struggle should have a place here, and I give them in the words of Edward L. Doyle, secretary-treasurer of the United Mine Workers. It is said that his face was wet with tears as he told the story, in almost hysterical snatches, between telephone calls that were at that moment giving him the details of the death of women and children at Ludlow.

"This is not a labor war. It is a slave revolt. Ten Siberian years have worked twelve thousand miners to a pitch where they prefer the death of free men in the open to serfdom underground. Because our masters know that we will not surrender as long as life lasts, they have resolved upon a campaign of extermination.

"Shortly after John D. Rockefeller, Jr.'s, testimony was given to the Congressional Committee at Washington, the forces of mine guards and militia became more active. As quickly as men and machine guns could be massed, the one thousand four hundred men, women and children in the Ludlow tent colony were surrounded and at a given word the slaughter commenced.

"We knew that it was only a question of time till such a massacre would come. First, it was the Baldwin-Felts thugs that tried to justify our utter destruction by murder, insult and ruffianism. For weeks before the strike they came pouring in from West Virginia and North Carolina, and as if the eight machine guns they brought were not enough, Felts had the Rockefeller steel plant in Pueblo make him an armored automobile called the 'Death Special.' In open defiance of law, the sheriffs of Las Animas and Huerfano appointed these non-resident desperadoes as deputies.

"But this method was slow, dangerous and expensive. Governor Ammons ordered out the militia, and straightway the operators transferred their mine guards and machine guns to the service of

the state. Of the 1716 so-called soldiers on duty in November we proved that more than half were gunmen, ex-convicts, and the refuse of the city slums, and that their leaders, if necessary, remained on the company payrolls.

"The civil courts were open and unobstructed, yet Chase, the vanity-mad doctor in command, created the Military District of Colorado, gathered a tribunal of corporation lawyers, real estate men and shabby nondescripts, and announced that he would arrest, try and execute without regard to the civil authorities.

"Read the sworn testimony given before the Congressional Committee if you want to know what the strikers suffered. They arrested them in great batches and held them without charge and without bail for weeks and months, denying the right to see counsel, friends or family. They chained the sick to hospital beds; brought death to prisoners by making them sleep on damp concrete; tried to extort confessions by keeping men awake night after night with bayonets or cold water; tortured poor Colnar by making him think that he was digging his own grave, and stood seventeen others in front of loaded guns for an hour, then beat them because they would not beg.

"'Mother' Jones, eighty-two years old, was held incommunicado from January to April because she would not agree to leave the state, and the writ of habeas corpus, for which our fathers died, was laughed out of court.

"Day after day, night after night, these uniformed bums danced with their harlots in our streets, fired through our houses and tents, insulted our wives and daughters, prodded us with their bayonets and beat us with their pistols, pillaged our homes and stole our savings, drove through our funeral processions and hounded the undertakers that had the courage to bury our dead. Because a crowd laughed when an officer fell from his horse, he kicked little Sarah Slater in the breast and had his mounted men ride down and saber women and children."*

As Edward Doyle was speaking these words, "the screams of dying women and children called the attention of the country to Colorado's industrial war. In one black day the Ludlow tent colony, sheltering fourteen hundred human beings, was wiped out of existence. Until dark the machine guns of the militia 'fanned' the doomed camp. Either from torch or bullet, the flimsy canvas coverings burst into blaze, forcing mothers and little ones to choose between death by shot and death by flame.

"A boy sprang into the open to save his sister. His head was blown off. Frenzied women, clasping babies, ran for cover like hunted rabbits, calling upon older children who were too paralyzed with fear to follow. Others huddled like rats in the safety pits and were burned alive. Their men, firing from the arroyos, were held back from rescue by a wall of lead.

**Everybody's Magazine*, Vol. XXX, pp. 761-762 (June, 1914).

"There will always be dispute about the facts of Ludlow. Only combatants witnessed the fighting, and for thirty-six hours the victorious militia threw an impenetrable cordon about the field, barring nurses, undertakers, civil officers and newspaper men alike, and preventing any instant investigation.

"The soldiers insist upon it as a battle started by the strikers. The strikers declare it a massacre planned in cold blood by the militia, asserting that Tikas and Flyer,* their leaders, were clubbed and shot after capture, and strengthening their case by pointing out that while only one soldier was killed, their own fatalities were twenty."†

In these words George Creel, of Colorado, tells of the Ludlow massacre, and he pictures the situation immediately following:

"A weeping, hysterical governor, a blood-drunk soldiery, crazed strikers, an armed working class, and a passion-swept people—these were the conditions on April 28 when President Wilson ordered Federal troops into Colorado for the restoration of peace and the restoration of order."‡

Does it not seem passing strange that these tragic events should have occurred in Colorado—of all places in this wide world, in Colorado—where the Trade Unionists of the Democratic party are so strong as almost to dominate the state, and where the political ideas of the A. F. of L. have been so perfectly worked out? Does it not seem incredible, that where Labor should be apparently so powerful John D. Rockefeller, Jr., should be allowed to violate the labor laws and import thugs and assassins to beat the miners with pistols, prod them with bayonets, fire into their tents, pillage their homes, and insult their wives and daughters? And why, when those miners were forced to

*"The Military Commission, reporting May 3d, found that Tikas and Flyer had been shot with soft-nosed bullets, and that the militia had deliberately fired the tents of the Ludlow colony. This commission recommended court-martial for the officers and men involved."

†*Everybody's Magazine*, Vol. XXX, pp. 755-756.

‡*Idem*, p. 756.

fight for their lives, did Governor Ammons call out the militia to make war on them? Were there no officials in that state capable of standing in Rockefeller's way and of preventing even so powerful an individual as he from exercising in Colorado the functions of a Russian Czar? There is just one sentence in George Creel's article which explains this mystery.

*"Governor Ammons," he says, "by the admission of Mr. Rockefeller's personal representative, crept into the office of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company prior to election and begged support."**

Once again, harmony between Capital and Labor in the Democratic Party! And once again Labor tastes the bitter fruit of that illicit alliance. This is the culmination of thirty-three years of political effort on the lines laid down by the A. F. of L. Here they are—"card men" in office—friends rewarded and enemies rebuked. Is it a success? Is this what Labor wants? An entire generation of the weary and heavy-laden has come and gone since that memorable meeting in Pittsburgh in 1881 when Mr. Gompers brought into the world his new political methods, including the long program, the labor lobby, the visits to the great political conventions, the election of "card men," and the non-partisan labor movement, deciding irrevocably the fate of friend and foe. Well, thirty-three years is a long, long time for Labor to have lost. We are already decades behind many countries of Europe in laws protecting the life, limb and health of the worker. We are losing ground every year, and it is time to think whether or not a full half-century shall be utterly lost before the two million organized workingmen in America lay their plans to start right.

*Everybody's Magazine, Vol. XXX, p. 768. Italics mine.

CHAPTER V.

THE POLITICS OF LABOR IN EUROPE.

Some travelers abroad are today impressed by nothing so much as the wide influence and immense strength exercised by Labor in the political life of European nations. Thirty years ago Labor was there a political nonentity. To-day it is the most powerfully organized and unified political force in Europe. In nearly every city council and in all the parliaments of Europe Labor has its own direct representatives. Hundreds of cities are today governed by trade-union Socialists. Never is a problem of interest to Labor presented in any city council, district legislature, or national parliament, that is not there attacked or defended by labor men. Among the ablest debaters, orators and parliamentarians of Europe during the last two decades have been the Socialists and labor leaders. The names of Bebel, Liebknecht, Jaurès, Guesde, Adler and Hardie are known all over the world. But few realize that beside them have sat for many years in the legislative bodies of Europe hundreds of actual workingmen—miners, engineers, and even common laborers—who did not obtain their seats by the favor of any capitalist party. They are there as the direct responsible representatives of the labor movement. They owe no obligations to any man, woman or political group, outside the working class. Their campaigns are conducted, and their salaries are paid, by the labor movement. Consequently, their time, thought and energy are given exclusively to the advancement of labor. The Trade Unionists of Europe have long recognized the imperative necessity of united political action. To them politics is just as important as any other form of activity, and, with immense en-

thusiasm and almost perfect unity, they are today fighting all over Europe a winning battle for the control of political power.

No words of mine could convey a better idea of the political strength of Labor throughout the world than the actual figures of the growth in the past and of the strength today of the labor and socialist vote.

THE SOCIALIST AND LABOR VOTE, 1887-1914.

	1887	1892	1897	1903	1914
Germany	763,000	1,786,000	2,107,000	3,010,000	4,250,399
France	47,000	440,000	790,000	805,000	1,398,771
Austria .....	.....	.....	750,000	780,000	1,053,627
Italy .....	.....	26,000	135,000	300,000	997,000
United States	2,000	21,000	55,000	223,494	931,406
Australia .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	678,012
Belgium .....	.....	320,000	457,000	464,000	483,241
Great Britain ...	.....	.....	55,000	100,000	378,839
Finland .....	.....	.....	.....	10,000	310,503
Sweden .....	.....	723	.....	10,000	229,339
Russia .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	200,000
Holland	1,500	.....	13,000	38,000	145,588
Norway .....	.....	.....	7,000	30,000	124,594
Denmark	8,000	20,000	32,000	53,000	107,412
Switzerland	2,000	39,000	40,000	70,000	105,000
Hungary .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	(a) 100,000
Bulgaria .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	85,489
Argentina .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	48,000
New Zealand....	.....	.....	.....	.....	44,960
Spain .....	.....	5,000	14,000	23,000	40,791
South Africa....	.....	.....	.....	.....	(b) 26,098
Servia .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	25,000
Chili .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	18,000
Canada .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	15,857
Greece .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	12,000
Luxembourg ....	.....	.....	.....	.....	4,000
Portugal .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	3,308
Roumania .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	2,057
Total	823,500	2,657,723	4,455,000	5,916,494	11,819,291

(a) This represents only the party membership and is furnished by A. Loewy, Hungarian translator-secretary to the Socialist Party of the United States.

(b) In Transvaal only.

Since the above table was prepared the great European war has broken out. It is, of course, impossible to foresee what effect that war will have upon the solidarity of Labor. Two elections have taken place during the progress of the war. In Australia the Labor Party has made immense gains and is now more powerful than the combined strength of the two parties opposed to it. In Sweden, the Socialist Party has greatly increased its strength and is today the most powerful party in Sweden. These elections would indicate that the war is likely to increase the trend toward Socialism. The figures given do not include the latest figures for Sweden or Australia, because no official statements have yet arrived from these countries and one can rarely depend upon press reports for perfect accuracy. The above table explains, in no small measure, the quiet patience and supreme confidence of the Socialist.* He looks upon that wonderful array of figures as the one most significant fact in the modern world. Within a quarter of a century his force has grown from 800,000 to over 11,000,000. And, while no other movement in history has grown so rapidly and traversed the entire world with such speed, the Socialist knows that even this table inadequately indicates his real power. For instance, in Great Britain the Labor Party has over one million dues-paying members, yet its vote is here placed at 378,839. Owing to the peculiar political conditions existing in that country, it is almost impossible for the Labor Party to put up its candidates in all districts, and these figures include only that small proportion of workingmen who have been able to cast their votes for their own candidates. The two hundred thousand Socialist votes in Russia do not at all represent the sentiment in that

*A few paragraphs following are taken from my "Violence and the Labor Movement."

country. Everything there militates against the open expression, and, indeed, the possibility of any expression, of the actual Socialist sentiment. In addition, great masses of workingmen in many countries are still deprived of the suffrage, and in nearly all countries the wives of these men are deprived of the suffrage. Leaving, however, all this aside, and taking the common reckoning of five persons to each voter, the Socialist strength of the world today cannot be estimated at less than fifty-five million souls.

Coming to the parliamentary strength of Labor and Socialism, we find the following table illuminating:

SOCIALIST AND LABOR REPRESENTATIVES IN PARLIAMENT.

Country—	Number of Seats in Lower House		Per Cent Socialist
	Total	Socialist	
Australia	111	66	59.46
Finland	200	90	45.00
Sweden	230	76	33.04
Denmark	114	36	31.57
Germany	397	110	27.71
Belgium	186	40	21.50
Norway	123	23	18.70
Holland	100	18	18.00
France	597	101	16.91
Austria	516	82	15.89
Italy	508	79	15.55
Luxembourg	53	7	13.21
Switzerland	189	19	10.05
Bulgaria	211	20	9.47
Argentina	120	10	8.33
Great Britain	670	42	6.26
South Africa	121	7	5.78
New Zealand	80	4	5.00
Russia	442	14	3.16
Greece	207	4	1.93
Servia	166	2	1.20
Portugal	164	1	.61
Spain	406	1	.25
United States	435	1	.23

It appears that Labor is in control of Australia, that forty-five per cent of the Finnish Parliament is Socialist, while in Sweden a third, and in Germany and Denmark somewhat less than a third, is Socialist. In several of the northern countries of Europe the parliamentary position of the Socialists is stronger than that of any other single party. In addition to the representatives here listed, Belgium has seven senators, Denmark four, and Sweden twelve, while in the state legislatures Austria has thirty-one, Germany one hundred and eighty-five, and the United States twenty-six assemblymen and four state senators. Here, again, the strength of Socialism is greatly understated. In the United States, for instance, the astonishing fact appears that, with a vote of nearly a million, the Socialist party has only one representative in Congress. On the basis of proportional representation it would have at least twenty-five Congressmen; and, if it were a sectional party, it could, with its million votes, control all the Southern states and elect every Congressman and Senator from those states. The Socialists in the German Reichstag are numerous, but on a fair system of representation they would have two or three-score more representatives than at present. However, this, too, is of little consequence, and in no wise disturbs the thoughtful Socialist. The immense progress of his cause completely satisfies him, and, if the rate of advance continues, it can be only a few years until a world victory is at hand.

If, now, we turn from the political aspects of the labor movement to examine the growth of coöperatives and of trade unions, we find a progress no less striking. In actual membership the trade unions of twenty nations in 1911 had amassed over eleven million men and women. And the figures sent out by the international secretary do not include countries so strongly organized as Canada, New Zea-

land and Australia. Unfortunately, it is impossible to add here reliable figures regarding the wealth of the great and growing coöperative movement. In Britain, Germany, Belgium, France, Italy and Switzerland, as well as in the northern countries of Central Europe, the coöperative movement has made enormous headway in recent years. The British coöperators, according to the report of the Federation of Coöperative Societies, had in 1912 a turnover amounting to over six hundred millions of dollars. They have over twenty-four hundred stores scattered throughout the cities of Great Britain. The Coöperative Productive Society and the Coöperative Wholesale Society produced goods in their own shops to a value of over sixty-five millions of dollars; while the goods produced by the Coöperative Provision Stores amounted to over forty million dollars. Seven hundred and sixty societies have Children's Penny Banks, with a total balance in hand of about eight million dollars. The members of these various coöperative societies number approximately three million. Throughout all Europe, through coöperative effort, there have been erected hundreds of splendid "Houses of the People," "Labor Temples," and similar places of meeting and recreation. The entire labor, Socialist and coöperative press, numbering many thousands of monthly and weekly journals, and hundreds of daily papers, is also usually owned coöperatively. Unfortunately, the statistics dealing with this phase of the labor movement have never been gathered with any idea of completeness, and there is little use in trying even to estimate the immense wealth that is now owned by these organizations of workingmen.

Surely, these facts should stir the blood and arouse the envy of American Trade Unionists. While we here have been for years divided into two main factions, Socialist and

Trade Unionist—each quarreling with the other, to the injury of both—the labor movement of Europe has not only formed powerful political parties, but has actually achieved tremendous social reforms through its political efforts. While the strongest section of the American movement has been lobbying in Congress without success, and, through the cunning of the Mulhalls, voting for the tools of the manufacturers, Germany and many other countries have, as Mr. Gompers has said, left us twenty years behind. However, I shall not attempt to speak in detail here of the political rights or of the social and labor legislation obtained by the labor parties of Europe, although if the items were listed they would amaze the American worker, as they amazed Mr. Gompers on his recent visit abroad. Writing on the subject of “municipal betterments” in Europe, Mr. Gompers says:

“Nothing more significant presented itself to my eye as a tourist than the difference in appearance of the German cities between the time I visited them fourteen years ago and the present year. * * * I went in each city to what at the period of my previous visit were the slum districts. In some of the cities these have been about completely wiped out. * * * Fine open new boulevards now run through quarters once the sorry refuge of the poorest stratum of society. In Berlin, in the northern section, a vast new working-class quarter has been developed. The streets in it are wide, the dwellings almost palatial. * * *

“And what is true in Germany appeared in a large degree also true of Italy, France and Switzerland, and to a lesser extent of Austria, Holland and Belgium.”*

To no small degree this vast improvement that has taken place in all European cities is the result of the activity of the labor parties. The abolition of many slums; the erection everywhere of handsome dwellings for workingmen; the municipal ownership of land, street railways, gas companies, and public utilities generally; vast sanitary im-

*Samuel Gompers, *Labor in Europe and America*. (Harper, New York, 1910.)

provements; minimum wage laws, eight-hour laws, insurance schemes to protect the sick, the aged, the permanently disabled, and the unemployed; laws for the safety of the workers of all trades; compensation acts, employers' liability acts; coöperative enterprises subsidized by the state—these and many other important social changes have been wrought by Labor through its political power.

✓ The trade unions have also won for themselves, through their parties, the right to boycott and to picket. In Europe, injunctions are unknown in labor disputes, and so also are gunmen, thugs, and private armies, in the employ of the capitalists. Such political anarchy as we have recently witnessed in Colorado, Michigan and West Virginia is likewise unknown in Europe, and nowhere, so far as I know, have machine guns been brought out by the state or by private individuals to mow down in cold blood men who are hungry and on strike. In many places the state itself feeds the children of the strikers.

"During the whole of this period" [the miners' strike], declared a British delegate to a recent convention of the A. F. of L., "no child was permitted to be without at least two meals a day," supplied at public cost and by the state.*

I have a picture somewhere among my things showing the London policemen going among the dock strikers, pouring out hot coffee and doling out rolls. Can anyone imagine such a situation here? It must seem wholly incredible to Trade Unionists in free America, where strikers are not allowed to talk, or assemble, and are clubbed, imprisoned, and even shot, by both the public police and the private detectives.

There is hardly a European government where Labor

*Report of Proceedings 1913 Convention, A. F. of L., p. 183.

has strongly entrenched itself in parliament that does not today acknowledge that in struggles between masters and men on the industrial field, the state should stand aside, and, while protecting property, it should aid neither side in the controversy. I do not claim that this theory is actually carried out in practice. In nearly every case the state does in some manner throw its aid to the employer, but the fact remains that in France, Great Britain, and elsewhere, the state has voted money to the strikers and even fed them when battling against the employers. I mention these incredible facts as among the greatest achievements of the labor movement in politics. By millions of voters, by a solidarity that is impressive, by a parliamentary representation that cannot be ignored, the labor and Socialist movement of Europe is forcing the governments to give the workers at least a measure of justice.

The political methods used by the Trade Unionists of Europe to obtain these reforms are entirely different from those used by the A. F. of L. It is a general policy of the workers in Europe to make the most extreme demands, and they would look with considerable amusement upon the program of the A. F. of L. Moreover, no trade union in all Europe would consider going to a convention of a capitalist party to ask it to grant some measures of relief to Labor. Nor would the unions think any longer of sending men to stand and plead in the lobbies of a legislature. The workers now have their own direct representatives in every parlia-

Mr. James A. Emery, the attorney of the National Association of Manufacturers, after a visit to Europe, declared: "There is, if anything, more labor politics in all the countries of Europe we have been in than in the U. S.; this is particularly true of England, where the Labor Party gets the most extreme demands * * *"

*Maintenance of a Lobby to Influence Legislation, p. 3473.

ment, who speak and fight on the floor in the interest of all labor legislation. These members, unlike the "card men" in our legislatures, are entirely independent of all capitalist parties. They are wholly responsible to a national labor organization, which not only sends them to Parliament, but expects them to report regularly to the organization as to what they are doing in Parliament. Unlike the members of the A. F. of L., the Trade Unionists of Europe are partisan. In fact, they are tremendously partisan, but to Labor and to Labor only.

Certainly, they have in times of crisis allied themselves with other parties, for instance in the present European war the French and Belgian Socialists have joined with all other parties in defense of their countries. But these alliances have not been left to individuals or to local organizations. They have always been of the most fleeting character, decided upon in open convention or by popular vote, for temporary purposes of defense or aggression. Even such alliances have been exceedingly rare. They are entered into with the utmost caution, and they are looked upon as exceedingly dangerous. As a whole the labor and socialist parties of Europe have been careful to keep out of them and to fight all other parties without discrimination. They have insisted that Labor should support its own candidates, and pointed out that every election is a battle-field in which Labor must stand united against all its foes. They usually provide in their constitutions that every Labor candidate must keep himself distinct from and independent of the old parties, not only in his own district, but everywhere in the nation. He cannot speak for, nor assist in any manner, the candidates of one of the rival parties. He must stand in opposition to them

in every electoral test, and, when in Parliament, he must become a part of the labor group, which shall exist distinct from and independent of all other Parliamentary groups. As a result, there is absolutely no field of operation in Europe for such men as Mulhall. Anyone who advocates in any manner the support of a rival party is considered to be a traitor to the cause of Labor. Under such conditions, there is no possibility of a Mulhall arranging alliances or fusions or obtaining anywhere an endorsement of a capitalist candidate. He might secretly buy a few individual labor men, but it would only mean buying so many votes, because these particular individuals would not venture to advocate in any political union in Europe the merits of any candidate of another party. This simple provision for absolute independence makes it impossible to corrupt the European movement. And as a result, one never sees in other countries such leeches on Labor as we have developed in this country, who periodically sell their "influence" to the manufacturers in strikes and to corrupt political bosses in elections.

The great European labor parties everywhere finance themselves. They ask no aid from outside sources, and, as a rule, they are entirely supported by a dues-paying membership. Besides financing all the party machinery, paying the salaries of all the officials, and in some cases even the salaries of the men in parliament, they also conduct hundreds of labor papers. They have great dailies in almost all the large cities, and thousands of weekly papers. And, of course, I am speaking now of "party" papers, which are distinct from the trade-union journals. The editors of these papers are chosen through the party councils. At regular annual conventions the reports of work done by the men elected to office is received, the laws of

the party are decided upon, the programs for contesting elections are made, and the candidates for public office are chosen. Constituted and managed in this manner, the parties of Europe are owned, financed, and absolutely controlled by the workers. Their growth has been enormous, and they have managed to unite, in the last quarter of a century, in support of their program and policies, over eleven million voters in the various lands. These are the political methods of practically the entire labor movement in all other countries, and, of course, they are those of the Socialist Party here. Obviously, they are very different from those of the A. F. of L., which have so dismally failed.

That the methods of Labor in Europe have brilliantly succeeded, one striking illustration will show. It deals with perhaps the most vital problem affecting the trade-union movement. It will be remembered that the A. F. of L., at its first convention, in 1881, demanded "the repeal and erasure from the statute books of all acts known as conspiracy laws." As has been said before, the A. F. of L. has by thirty-three years of unceasing agitation been able in only one State, that of Massachusetts, to alter the conspiracy laws in a manner to give real relief to Labor.

Curiously enough, an exactly similar situation faced the British Trades Unionists when the courts of England attempted in 1910 to work the same game.

"The British workingmen realized," says Mr. Gompers, "that they were about to be placed in the same position as the old guilds were, of about three centuries ago, subject to confiscation at the will and the fancy of the King. They were aroused. They held public meetings and in their organization meetings and in their national congresses they decided upon the inauguration of a campaign for the repeal or rather for an amendment to the law that would annul the decision or would overcome the decision of the courts of England in the Taff-Vale case, and it resulted in the

enactment by Parliament of what is known the British trades dispute act of 1906."*

That statement includes most of the essential facts. The Taff-Vale decision was handed down in 1901. At the general elections in January, 1906, the British Labor Party sent twenty-nine trade-union members into the House of Commons. They stormed that house, and their onslaught so astounded the old parties that they fell over themselves in passing the Trades Disputes Act of 1906. That act altered the common law and overturned the court's decision in the Taff-Vale case. It definitely legalized the right of union men to strike, to picket, and to boycott. Here was a Magna Charta of the labor movement, obtained in less than five years of united political action. Could there be an illustration more convincing of the power of independent labor politics? What the American Federation has struggled for during its entire existence, what it has begged and pleaded for in many party conventions, and in every session of Congress for thirty-three years, the British Trade Unionists obtained by uniting the workers in one election and by sending into the House of Commons a fighting body of labor men.

I cannot leave this comparison between the methods used by Labor abroad and those used by Labor here without introducing still another illustration. The American labor movement has struggled for over a half a century for a Federal eight-hour law. The first eight-hour law was passed in 1848, but what happened to it I don't know. Another was passed in 1868, but it proved a failure because of a decision of the Supreme Court. In 1892 still another eight-hour law was passed, but once again the attorneys-general and the courts interpreted the law in a manner that

*Maintenance of a Lobby to Influence Legislation, pp. 2474, 2475.

made it ineffective. The American Federation of Labor then undertook to draft and to secure an effective eight-hour law which would be constitutional. Then began what Mr. Gompers has described in the *American Federationist* of August, 1913, as the "twenty-year struggle for adequate eight-hour legislation."* Upon the advice of the Hon. John J. Gardner, of New Jersey, a bill was drawn up and introduced into Congress in 1897. It passed the House, but was defeated in the Senate. It was again introduced in 1900 and was again passed by the House. But through "parliamentary jugglery" the bill was again defeated by the Senate. The same little drama was enacted in the next Congress with the same dismal results. Through three or four sessions of Congress the bill was unsuccessfully pressed by the legislative agents of the A. F. of L., during which time some of the Senators and Representatives friendly to the bill were defeated for re-election by the political machines, while the committees of the House and the Senate dealing with the bill were packed against it. Again and again it was smothered in committee, and even when reported out of committee it was found to be vitiated by amendments. Every means known to corrupt politicians and to the powerful forces that control Congress was used to delay, year after year, the passage of this bill. It is incredible that so much cunning, corruption, trickery, and even malice could be employed by the old political machines over so small a matter as a Federal eight-hour bill. An eight-hour measure that applied to all industries in the country might, of course, call forth formidable opposition, but it is quite unbelievable that a bill which applied only to government work, whether done by the state, by the contractors, or by the sub-contract-

*Page 590.

tors, should have aroused such bitter opposition and evoked the most vicious methods of our political life. It was only after twenty years of the most persistent and incessant lobbying on the part of the A. F. of L. that this moderate measure in the interest of Labor was finally passed by Congress.

Let us contrast with this struggle just one year of legislative activity on the part of the British Labor Party. It entered the House of Commons as an independent party in 1906. In addition to its demand for a law giving the unions the unquestionable right to picket, boycott, and strike, it also demanded a law providing for an eight-hour day in all the British mines. T. Grenall, a fraternal delegate of the British Trades Unions to the A. F. of L. convention of 1913, says that

"For thirty years * * * the miners, through their organizations were spending hundreds of thousands of pounds in trying * * * to pass that act of parliament in the interest of the miners. We were sending deputations to cabinet ministers, sending * * * men from out of the mines, to lobby members of the House of Commons. We were going, as it were, and knocking at the door of the House of Commons year after year without any results at all. It is an historic fact that not until we decided we would send our representatives into the House of Commons and voice our opinions there were we enabled to get that act of Parliament enacted which has been of so much benefit to the miners of Great Britain."*

As against these thirty years of unsuccessful lobbying in Britain, there stands just the one year of the work of the British Labor Party. Its bill was introduced in 1906, and was passed in 1907.

Here are two illustrations, both dealing with laws on identical subjects in the two countries, which contrast the method of the American labor movement with that of the European labor movement: As against the thirty-three years

*Report of Proceedings 1913 Convention A. F. of L., p. 178.

of effort on the part of the A. F. of L. to obtain the right to picket and to boycott without interference from the courts, we have five years of effort on the part of the British trade unions. As against the twenty years' struggle of the A. F. of L. for an eight-hour law, we have the one year's struggle of the British Trade Unionists. Is any further argument necessary to prove that the political methods of the A. F. of L. are too slow, too costly, and too ineffective? Is it any wonder that Germany and nearly every country of Europe are already twenty years ahead of us in legislation favorable to Labor? The simple fact is this, the present methods of the A. F. of L. are today the greatest obstacle in the path of Labor. They are a delusion and a snare, and unless more effective and intelligent methods are devised by the labor movement of America, it will face in the future the most dismal outlook for Labor that exists in any part of the world.

In discussing these matters with actual Trade Unionists, it is surprising to find that, while the British deplore the fact that they have made too little progress and declare that things are coming their way altogether too slowly, many American Trade Unionists seem actually to believe that they are making progress. Although the British Labor Party has already made it impossible for the courts to meddle in strikes; although it has passed an eight-hour bill for the miners, a law for feeding school children, and a comprehensive workmen's compensation act; although it has established labor exchanges throughout the country to assist the unemployed, passed town-planning acts to deal with the slums of the great cities, obtained pensions for the aged and minimum-wage laws for the sweated; although it controls scores of town councils,—the workers are

not satisfied. They want more, much more, and they are today trying in every manner so to consolidate their political forces as to dominate every industrial town council in England and to become invincible in the House of Commons. But while they confess frankly that the progress they are making is too slow, the leaders of the American Federation of Labor, with policies that have accomplished almost nothing in thirty-three years, actually seem satisfied with their present methods. In a dozen places, in the *American Federationist* and in the reports to the conventions of the A. F. of L., Mr. Gompers is most enthusiastic over Labor's "remarkable success" in punishing its enemies and rewarding its friends.

"In the old days," he says, "Labor got nothing, but since Labor rose with fitting authority and asserted its right to justice and due consideration, these old-time politicians and worshippers of plutocracy have been somewhat curbed and made less confident and arrogant. * * * Labor wisely chose non-partisan political activity for the sake of righteousness, human justice and rights."*

I leave the reader to judge which is the healthier state for a labor movement, that of the British, which, although having accomplished much, continues restless, dissatisfied, and eager for more, or that of the American, which, having little to its credit, refuses to admit its weakness or to alter its methods.

As I have said, the great achievements of the European workers have come through their united political efforts. There is in Europe almost no distinction between Labor and Socialism. Fortunately, the words of Mr. James Duncan make this very clear, and fortunately, also, Mr. Duncan is not a prejudiced witness. As vice-president of the A. F. of L., and as one who has never shown any sympathy for Socialism, his words should have particular weight. In

**American Federationist*, Vol. XX (August, 1913), p. 611.

1911 he visited several countries of Europe and was quite astonished to find everywhere that Socialists and Trade Unionists worked in complete harmony.

"They are an excellent lot of men, those trade-union and Socialist members of Parliament. They fraternize in commendable manner." In Germany he found that they had "two great movements, * * * which easily makes it the leading country on the continent of Europe. They have a first-class trade-union movement" and also "a well-organized political movement, and when its purposes as such sufficiently diverge, as also do the purposes of the trade-union movement, they in time meet and the two bodies then act unitedly. * * * The one organized party, which is a living, active protest against imperialism and force of government, is the Socialist Party. * * * The European movement is an education in itself. The harmony which exists between the trade unionists, attending to trade affairs, and the Socialists, attending to political affairs, is everywhere in evidence. Where a trade dispute exists there the Socialists are helping, and where a political contest is going on the trade unionists perform their part in supporting the social program, and between the two the future welfare of the masses of the people will be worked out."

Unfortunately, the same is not true of America. [From the earliest days of the American Federation of Labor Mr. Gompers and some of his friends have not only opposed the idea of a strictly independent labor party, but they have on nearly all occasions shown immense hostility to Socialist principles, Socialist methods, and Socialist ideals. If at times the Socialists have assailed "Gompersism," it is explained by the fact that Mr. Gompers has incessantly assailed Socialism. If some few Socialists have been goaded into attacking *his Trade Unionism*, it is largely because Mr. Gompers has on all occasions bitterly denounced *their political unionism*. Political unity appears to the Socialist no less important to the life and welfare of the working class than trade, craft, or industrial unity. And, while Mr. Gompers has never hesitated to assail this hope and ideal

*Report of Proceedings 1911 Convention A. F. of L., pp. 146-158.

of the Socialists, he is particularly incensed when the Socialists turn their guns upon him, his policies, or his organization. To say that this dissension is deplorable and, worst of all, injurious to the entire working-class movement of America, is to express ourselves mildly. It has injured the A. F. of L., fostered a plague of dual unionism, and retarded the natural evolution of the labor movement toward political unity and Socialism. Altogether it is one of the most unfortunate things that has ever afflicted the labor movement in any part of the world.

The only remedy for the present political impotence of the A. F. of L. is, of course, independent political action. That is the only way to rid the labor movement of the Mulhalls and the only way to create unanimity and solidarity among the workers. Unhappily, neither reason nor impending ruin is effective in moving Mr. Gompers. Despite the experience of Europe, he and other officials of the A. F. of L. persist in believing that if the trade unions of this country should sever their connection with the capitalist parties, it would mean their ruin. Mr. Gompers made such a prophecy at the A. F. of L. convention in 1894 at Denver, when he pointed out that the National Labor Union in 1872 launched a political party and that, as a consequence, it never afterward held a national convention. He then gave a very black picture of the disorganized condition of Labor in the following years, and begged the delegates of the convention to

"steer our ship of labor safe from that channel whose waters are strewn with shattered hopes and unions destroyed."*

Eighteen years later, when assailing the Socialists in the *American Federationist* (February, 1912) he says:

*Report of the Proceedings, p. 15.

LABOR IN POLITICS

"Trade unionists refuse 'to shift the ground largely to the political field.' * * * National unions of labor in America, prior to the formation of the American Federation of Labor, made a shift, charmed with the voice of political sirens, and wrecked their craft on the Lorelei rocks of dissension. They disintegrated. Their wreckage forms a warning to the present day."*

When a man of the standing and influence of Mr. Gompers feels it his duty to warn Trade Unionists against independent political action, by appeals as earnest as the above, it is only to be expected that they should be affected by his words. Needless to say, Mr. Gompers' warnings have not been without avail, and thousands of workingmen usually believe that if the trade unions of this country were to launch an independent labor party, it would be the ruin of the labor movement.

Unfortunately, the history of American trade-union parties offers apparently considerable support to the fears of Mr. Gompers. The hardiest of them only survived a few years, and all of them proved anything but beneficial to the labor movement. They accomplished certain beneficial results for the working class in general, but in nearly every case they temporarily hurt the trade unions. This much must be said for Mr. Gompers' position. But against his position there seems to me one valid argument. There has never yet been a labor party in this country—with the exception of the present Socialist party—that has been strictly independent of the capitalist parties. And it is to this lack of real independence, it seems to me, that all the failures of American labor in politics can be traced. A labor party which is not strictly independent of all other parties is destined from the start to be a failure. The reason is very simple. A labor party which undertakes to endorse the candidates of, or to fuse and ally itself with, rival parties

*Vol. XIX, p. 140.

is in reality inviting corruption to enter its ranks. The Mulhalls would flock into such an organization just as they now flock into the trade unions. As soon as a labor party seeks fusion with a capitalist party, the machine politicians get busy with their money, and in every case the labor party is bought up. It then becomes merely an appendage to some machine boss, and he takes care to destroy it without ceremony. By adopting a few labor candidates, and by a generous expenditure of money, the so-called labor party is soon thoroughly digested in the belly of its enemy. This has been the sad story of nearly every American trade-union party, which merely means that a strictly independent labor party has never existed in the entire history of America.

What, no doubt, Mr. Gompers really fears is not so much independent political action but the fact that such action leads the workers invariably into Socialism. He has observed, perhaps, that all the European labor parties favor Socialism. And Socialism is, as we have seen, the *bête noire* of Mr. Gompers. He seems to believe that Socialism will destroy the unions, and, of course, if that is his honest opinion, it is his duty to oppose Socialism with all his power. And, while it is the opinion of every Socialist that Mr. Gompers' fear has no basis in fact, it is obvious that no one can entirely refute Mr. Gompers' position—if this is his position—by appealing to the experience of American Trade Unionists only. It might be pointed out that the brewers' and bakers' unions have for years been officered by Socialists, and that the brewers are among the most successful Trade Unionists in America. It might also be pointed out that the machinists and the tailors are today officered by Socialists, and that no one can discover that the slightest injury has been done to those unions. One might even call attention to the fact that among the ablest and most efficient

officers of the United Mine Workers of America are the Socialists and that in part through their efforts the strongest labor organization in America has been built up. Moreover, there is the strong, vigorous, and successful labor movement of Wisconsin. Here the Trade Unionists and the Socialists work in complete harmony. The chief Socialists are also Trade Unionists, and the trade-union leaders, as well as the rank and file, are pretty generally Socialists. The movements are entirely distinct, one from the other, but they are the two arms of Labor, working in perfect sympathy and harmony and one with the other. Will anyone in America say that the labor movement of Wisconsin is less effective than any other similar movement in America? In fact, is it not actually more effective, by reason of its strong body of Trade Unionists in the state legislature, fighting there for every measure in the interest of Labor? Have the Trade Unionists lost anything by putting Socialists in control of the city of Milwaukee? No one who has the slightest knowledge of the labor laws passed in the state of Wisconsin and of the measures taken by the city of Milwaukee in the interests of the Trade Unionists and the working class generally, would venture to say that the great combined political and industrial movement of that state ranks second to the movement in any other state of the Union. There is more militancy and less dissension in the trade-union movement of Wisconsin than perhaps in any other state. Yet for nearly twenty years it has been under the leadership of the Socialists.

These are strong facts. Yet I think not even they will entirely refute Mr. Gompers' position. He may answer that the trial is not over and that the future will yet prove the soundness of his view. There remains still another method of refutation, and that is, to take the trade unions

of Europe, which, with hardly a single exception, are officered from top to bottom by avowed Socialists. Not only the officials, but almost the entire rank and file of the Trade Unionists are Socialists. Well, what has been the effect of Socialism on the trade unions of Europe? Are they weaker than the American? Have they accomplished less for the working class? Have they become the tail of someone's "political kite?" as Mr. Gompers likes to say. Have all the energies of the leaders been fooled away in politics and the rank and file been made the dupes of selfish and corrupt political machines? These are important questions to consider in answering the charge that Socialist politics will destroy the unions.

Their answers are to be found in the actual facts and figures of the progress of Trade Unionism in Europe during the period in which the workers there have created their vast labor parties. In the previous pages I have given the figures showing the rise of the Socialist and Labor vote. I have shown that from the year 1877 to the year 1913 the actual voting strength of the labor movement has increased from a little over 800,000 to over 11,000,000. There is no question whatever, therefore, that the political efforts of the labor movement in Europe have been an immense success. When we turn to consider the trade-union development in Europe, the results are no less gratifying. I shall not attempt to go into the facts for many countries. Probably the best trade-union and Socialist organizations in Europe are those in Denmark, where practically every Trade Unionist is a Socialist. An extraordinary thing about Denmark is the fact that out of a total of 243,718 workers—which includes those engaged in agriculture—over 150,000 are members of the Danish trade unions. In no other country of the world

is there so high a percentage of organized workingmen. Moreover, out of the 150,000 men and women Trade Unionists, there are about 107,000 Socialists. Let us now consider the following table, which shows the growth of the trade-union membership during recent years in Great Britain, Germany, and the United States:

**GROWTH OF THE MEMBERSHIP IN THE TRADE UNIONS
OF AMERICA, GERMANY AND GREAT BRITAIN.**

Year.	America.	Germany.	Great Britain.
1904	1,676,200	1,052,108	1,900,251
1905	1,494,300	1,344,803	1,925,608
1906	1,454,200	1,689,709	2,118,585
1907	1,538,970	1,865,506	2,412,265
1908	1,586,885	1,831,731	2,375,769
1909	1,482,872	1,832,667	2,347,199
1910	1,562,112	2,017,298	2,426,592
1911	1,761,835	2,320,986	3,010,346
1912	1,770,145	2,530,390	3,287,858

N. B.—The above figures give the membership of the American Federation of Labor, of the organization that corresponds to it in Germany, the Central Federation of Trade Unions, and the Board of Trade figures for all the trade-union membership in Great Britain. There are several hundred thousand trade unionists in both America and Germany which are not affiliated to the central organizations. If we were to include all trade unionists in the United States in 1912 the total figures would be 2,604,701, while if we include all trade unionists in Germany, the total would be 3,317,271.

The above figures seem to prove adequately enough that strictly independent labor and Socialist politics have worked no injury to the European trade unions. In fact, the progress made by the German trade unions outdoes that of both Great Britain and America. In 1904 there were a bare million of union members in Germany. Great Britain was then ahead by over half a million members. Within two years Germany had passed the American movement, and in

1912 exceeded it by about 700,000 members. In nine years Great Britain has added to its roll of trade-union membership over a million; Germany over a million and a half; while the American Federation of Labor has added a bare hundred thousand. These figures are staggering. It appears that the American Federation of Labor is almost standing still. In fact, a few years ago, there were some who doubted if there were as many members in the trade unions then as there were members of the Knights of Labor many years ago. Mr. Jacob G. Schonfarber, testifying before the Industrial Commission of 1900, calculated that the Knight of Labor had at one time

"at least 1,200,000 men then in good standing, with a floating membership of 300,000."*

However, there is no doubt that the actual membership of the trade unions here is growing and that the organizations are now far more solidly established than they have ever been in the past. Nevertheless, we are not making the same rapid progress in this country that the trade unions are making in Europe.

A mere statement of membership, however, does not enable us to judge as to the relative value to the workers of the trade unions here and those abroad. It may perhaps be well, then, to compare the benefits obtained for the working class here and abroad. The trade unions of Europe conduct proportionately about the same number of strikes as do the trade unions of this country. In which country do the strikes fail most frequently? The following figures may give some idea as to that:

*Report of the Industrial Commission, 1900, Vol. VII, p. 420.

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FAILURE OF STRIKES IN GERMANY AND UNITED STATES, 1900-1905.

Year.	Per Cent Lost in Germany (a)	Per Cent Lost in United States (b)
1900	25.5	29.99
1901	32.6	32.45
1902	36.9	27.97
1903	28.5	34.51
1904	22.1	48.66
1905	21.0	47.12

Unfortunately, I cannot make a comparison covering a longer period. The figures given by the United States Commissioner of Labor include those for each year from 1881 to 1905. The figures of the International Report of the Trades Union Movement give those for Germany from 1900 to 1912. It has been necessary, therefore, to limit the comparison to the years 1900-1905. In 1902 the strikes in Germany were not as successful as those in America, but after that year they were considerably more successful, and each year, with the exception of 1908, the percentage of strikes that have failed in Germany has diminished. In 1910 only fourteen per cent of the strikes were lost.

Unfortunately, there are no figures indicating the victories won by the American labor movement without strikes. The Germans publish figures showing that from 1905 to 1912, from one-half to three-quarters of all their grievances were settled satisfactorily without strikes. In 1912, over seven thousand grievances, involving 1,254,000 workmen, were settled without strikes. In that year, however, about

(a) Figures given by the Tenth International Report of the Trades Union Movement, 1912 (Berlin, 1913), p. 126.

(b) Figures given by the Twenty-first Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labor, 1906 (Washington, 1907), p. 37.

half a million men were called out. It is pointed out in the report that this ability to force concessions without striking

"shows not only the growing power of the trades unions, but it also bears testimony that the workers are not concerned in the first place with striking—as the anti-Socialists continually assert. * * * The workers resort to a strike only when a peaceful understanding in regard to the differences concerning the fixing of the conditions of wages and labor has become hopeless on account of the obstinacy of the employer."*

While comparing the effectiveness of the German and the American trade unions, let us consider for a moment the matter of finances. During the twenty-two years beginning 1891 the Central Federations expended \$41,000,000 for fraternal benefits and over \$30,000,000 for strikes. Unfortunately, we have no such complete figures for America, and, therefore, no satisfactory comparison can be made. However, in the year 1912, the trade unions of America spent \$3,000,345 in support of strikes, while the Germans the same year spent about \$3,100,000. It appears that the amount of money spent on strikes in this country and in Germany is about the same, although, as a matter of fact, a dollar in Germany will go twice as far as a dollar in this country. However, even more important than the cost of strikes is the amount of money spent by the various trade unions in benefits of one kind or another. The following figures tell their own tale. It may be well, however, to mention that the German government insures practically every working man and woman in Germany against accident, sickness, invalidity, and death. In 1912 over 800,000,000 marks, or about 200,000,000 dollars, were paid out to the

*P. 123.

German working class in benefits.* That is, of course, a stupendous sum and would seem to make more or less necessary the activity of the trade unions in insuring their members. Such state insurance does not exist in America, and consequently there is far more opportunity and necessity for the development here by the trade unions of their insurance features.

BENEFITS PAID BY GERMAN AND AMERICAN UNIONS,
1912.

Benefit.	Germany (a)	U. S. (Internatl. Unions (b))
Traveling	\$ 294,775	\$ 33,693
Removal	101,351	.....
Unemployment	1,935,310	69,445
Sickness	2,859,081	816,336
Death	294,577	1,958,892
Distress	128,961	.....
Blacklist	267,688	.....
Death, members' wives.....	.....	58,420
Tool insurance .....	.....	2,875
Total	\$5,881,743	\$2,939,661

As we see, the German unions are far more effective than those of the American Federation of Labor in this field. Certainly these facts, if they prove anything, prove this, that the trade unions which have made the greatest progress in recent years and brought the best results to Labor are avowedly Socialist.

As the Trade Unionists in all the European countries also conduct their own political parties, the officials are forced to do double duty. They must not only serve their trade unions and carry on all the immense executive work of those unions; they must not only handle strikes, edit

*Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich, 1914, p. 387.

(a) Figures taken from the Tenth International Report of the Trades Union Movement, 1912 (Berlin, 1913), p. 111.

(b) Figures taken from the Report of Proceedings 1913 Convention, A. F. of L. (Washington, 1913), p. 24.

trade papers, and administer their great finances, but they must also spend weeks and days in parliament working on committees and fighting for or against measures affecting Labor. They must also frequently do political work outside of the legislatures; carry on Socialist propaganda, organize Socialist locals, tour their countries, making political speeches and labor in every way possible to advance the political organizations of the working class. When men are called upon to perform such prodigious work, it would seem inevitable that something should be neglected, and, if politics were chiefly to absorb their time, that the trade unions must suffer. But that is not the case, as the above figures fully prove. On the contrary, despite their manifold duties, they are outstripping, in their trade-union development, the American movement, whose leaders are free to give all their time, thought, and energy exclusively to the development of the trade unions. We are unwilling to admit that the Americans are less efficient than the Germans or the British. Nor are we prepared to believe that Americans, when they give their whole time to one job, cannot do it better than other men who give their time to two jobs. The truth probably is that the great progress of the German and British trade unions is not due to a leadership that is more efficient than ours. It is rather that independent political activity is in itself a tremendous incentive to organization. It arouses the workers themselves to perfect their unions, both political and industrial, and to fight with more zeal, energy, and solidarity than ever the forces that are allied against them.

The British and German movements are not one day fighting the enemy in strikes and the next day making friends with him at the polls. They know that their battle, day in and day out, in the shops, in the legislatures, in elections, in debates, and in all public meetings everywhere and

in public combats everywhere, is against the exploiter of Labor. It does not matter in what form he appears—as a manufacturer, landlord, banker, machine boss, or corporation lawyer—the labor movement is there to combat him. If he assails them in Parliament, the workers are there to meet him on the floor and defend their rights. If he assails them on the industrial field, the unions bring up their battalions to meet him there. He cannot escape, no matter what form of combat he chooses. It is these battles, both political and industrial, which give to the movement that enthusiastic militancy which is its very salvation and which renders it comparatively easy for its officials to build up the membership of the European organizations to such a remarkable degree.

At any rate, these facts answer the chief arguments of Mr. Gompers against Socialism as well as against independent political action. What the Germans, the British, the Italians, the Austrians, the Swedes, the Finns, the Norwegians, the Danes, the Belgians, and the other peoples of Europe have done, the Americans can do. No one need fear that the dire results which Mr. Gompers prophesies must come if the American labor movement undertakes to throw itself wholeheartedly into independent politics. But it is essential that they be like the politics of the European parties—strictly independent of, and actually hostile to, the capitalist parties. Otherwise they must fail just as the efforts of our earlier labor parties failed. If a labor movement once admits the possibility of fusion with the capitalist parties, it will be corrupted and destroyed. On the other hand, the American worker should go into strictly independent politics with his eyes open to this indubitable truth, that, as soon as Labor decides upon complete inde-

and on to the end

pendence of all capitalist parties and influences, it means that it must eventually become Socialist.

Perhaps this assertion requires an explanation. What I mean is this, that that has been the experience of every labor movement in Europe. Ever since the days of the first International, the Socialists have made it perfectly clear that their chief concern is to bring the struggle of the classes upon the political field. Toward this end they have urged, in season and out of season, the political unity of Labor. In every country of the world they have urged existing labor organizations to take the initiative, and, wherever a strictly independent labor party has been formed by the trade unions, the mass of Socialists have joined with the Trade Unionists and have given their time, thought, and energy to the development of the political movement. In England, Belgium and Italy, where the labor parties were not at first Socialist parties, the Socialists nevertheless entered wholeheartedly into the political activities of the labor organizations. It is only in those countries where the trade unions have absolutely declined to launch their own political parties, as, for instance, in England before 1901, and here, that the Socialists have undertaken themselves to do that work. Even in our own country, where there has always been antagonism between certain leading Socialists and certain leading Trade Unionists, the former endeavored at first to persuade the labor organizations to take the initiative, and pledged themselves to stand by an independent labor party if one were launched by the trade unions. The chief immediate aim, then, of the Socialists in all countries has been to build up political unions that would solidify Labor in its political struggles, as the trade unions have solidified Labor in its industrial struggles.

In order that no doubt shall exist as to the immense

benefits that result from harmony between Trade Unionism and Socialism, I shall end this chapter with some testimony that can easily be verified by any Trade Unionist who cares to consult the proceedings of the conventions of the A. F. of L. They are the words of some of the fraternal delegates from England and Canada to the A. F. of L., that refer to the value of a united Labor and Socialist movement and to the success of the independent political activities of the labor movement abroad.

Let us begin with the testimony of Ben Tillett, given no less than thirteen years ago, when he was one of the British Fraternal Delegates to the 1901 Convention of the A. F. of L.

"We have in our Trades Council," he said, "very effective local bodies who are making for municipal Socialism. Every thinking trade unionist, with few exceptions, is a Socialist in the old country. I do not know the reason why it is not popular here. Let me tell you what is being done by the Socialist trades unions. During the last twelve years \$1,500,000,000 has been put into municipal enterprises to beautify the cities and to keep from the capitalist that which he would have used in exploiting the people. The miners insist on representatives from the various unions going to Parliament. They pay the expenses of their election; they pay them double salaries and feel only too honored to have political agents that work in their behalf when something is being advocated by the unions, and I hope soon to see a big labor party in the British House of Commons."*

In the same strain is the testimony given the following year by British Delegate M. Arrandale:

"Yes, sir; we hold that it is the duty of the workers to see to it that they are represented on local and imperial bodies—that is, so far as our city councils and our parliaments are concerned, and as a proof of that, Mr. President, my colleague and myself have been representatives in our respective City Councils for a good many years, and we hold that the workers can be benefited very much by having representatives from their own bodies to look after their interests."†

*Report of the Proceedings of 1901 Convention, pp. 114-115.

†Report, 1902 Convention, p. 137.

At the 1904 Convention the determination to get into Parliament was again expressed by British Delegate James Wignall. After telling of the wonderful trade-union progress made in the preceding years, he continued:

"But we are not even content with this work. We have felt for a long time that instead of asking other men to make laws for us, we should try to get our own men into the House of Commons to make laws. We long ago became tired of going, cap in hand, to those we have given our votes to and have come to the conclusion that the Almighty did not give all the brains to the rich people; that he has given brains to the poor as well as to the rich, and we intend to give them a chance to use them. We have men fit to represent us in the House of Commons."*

The same year the other British delegate, William A. Mabon, urged the Americans to keep pace with the British:

"Now, we ask you in closing to use your own means, your own methods to secure for yourselves a workingmen's compensation act. This request probably is not as unselfish as it appears to be, for we know that whatever legislation is secured in America we can secure in time; and if you in America succeed in getting such an act passed there will be no fear of the workers of Great Britain ever losing the benefit of their act."†

The disgust with the old methods and the hope in the new were growing, and at the 1905 Convention British Delegate David Gilmour spoke as follows:

"Now I come to the more important part—at least in my opinion—and * * * I think I am entitled to give you briefly, not only my own views, but the views of practically 95 per cent of the British trade unionists. The British Trades Union Congress has been compelled to consider this question. Since its organization year after year it has passed a whole bunch of resolutions. Then we appointed men to go into the lobby of the House of Commons and almost go down on their knees and beg this or that or the other Sir or Esquire to support the measure. We made up our minds to do away with that sort of thing. You are in a far better position to have representatives in Congress from your own ranks than we are * * * because our members are not paid. We have now decided to run direct from the ranks of the trade unions men, whose business it will be not only to say they are in favor of

*Report, 1904 Convention, p. 122.

†*Idem*, p. 126.

this, that or the other reform, but who will fight on the floor for such reforms. If the rank and file of men could see how their work is carried out in Parliament, there would be no two opinions of the necessity for a change. * * * It appears ridiculous that we will send to Parliament to make laws for us the man we cannot trust to weigh the material the workers produce. * * * For our own self-preservation the time has come when we cannot depend upon the capitalists, the men of the class whose interests are opposed to the interests of the workers. Ordinary common sense and self-preservation demand that we shall change this. * * * I believe, so far as my experience of the trade-union movement in Great Britain is concerned, the workers have made up their minds that they are going to frame and formulate laws, and instead of being content with sending men to lobby in the House of Commons, they are going to send men to make the laws there.”*

At the A. F. of L. Convention of 1906 the British Fraternal Delegate J. N. Bell told of the striking success that met the independent political efforts of British Labor.

“I am one of those,” he said, “who for sixteen years past have been trying to persuade the trade unionists of England to go into politics. At first it was said that if we introduced politics into the trade unions men of different creeds and parties would fall out and trade unionism would be injured. But the time came when those of us who thought we should go into politics received very powerful assistance. That was when the judges interpreted the law against us. * * * There was nothing left for the trade unions but to enter politics, whether they liked it or not. We determined if we entered politics it should not be under the auspices of either of the great political parties, but we would have a party of our own. We did so, and found the money to run that party, and as a consequence we are in a position to control it. * * * We have found * * * that the differences that divide Socialism and trade unionism are, after all, not so very great. * * * Although the Socialist cannot get the trade unionist as far as he wants him to go, he is willing to travel the same road as long as it is possible for them to travel together. When the election came the Socialist candidates were supported by the trade unionists, and the trade union candidates were supported by the Socialists. To that policy is to be ascribed the great measure of success that awaited us, a success that went far beyond our anticipations. * * * You may ask if all this has injured trade unionism along other lines. * * * On the contrary, the success that has awaited us at the election has quickened interest generally in the labor unions in our country.

*Report, 1905 Convention, pp. 137, 138.

The inspiration we had in the general election came, it is only fair to say, from the Socialist ranks."*

At the same convention British Fraternal Delegate Allan Gee, in speaking of the Labor Party, said: "That organization has proved up to the hilt that it was the right and proper policy for us to pursue."†

In 1907, President Gompers said, in introducing the British Delegate David J. Shackleton:

"He was to have been with us at Minneapolis last year, but a bill that stood to relieve the British organized wage workers from the effect of the Taff-Vale decision was up for consideration, and he had that bill in charge. * * * The result of his remaining at his post has been to give to the organized workingmen of Great Britain a law which we have been trying to get from our Congress in vain for these past several years."‡

As a part of a most interesting address, and speaking of the situation prior to entering politics, Shackleton said:

"When elections came around we were dumb beasts. We dare not express any opinion on any political or semi-political labor question * * * and every labor leader was kept outside of politics * * * for fear of injuring his position as a responsible leader of the men and women in purely trade-union work. With the entrance of the trades unionists into politics on trade lines, the door was opened, and today whenever any election comes around we are on the platform of our own party advising our men and women what is the course they shall pursue."§

At the same convention British Delegate Hodge said:

"When all those injunctions * * * appeared, it caused us * * * to look into politics in a way which we had never previously done. We began to ask ourselves this question: How is it and why is it that trade unionism exists? Does it not exist to protect ourselves against the domination of capital? Does it not exist because we cannot trust our employers with either our conditions of labor or our wages? If we cannot trust them with those things, and we appoint men out of our own ranks as presidents, secretaries and executive members, why, in Heaven's name, do the

*Report, 1906 Convention, p. 122.

†*Idem*, p. 124.

‡Report, 1907 Convention, pp. 127-128.

§*Idem*, p. 131.

men you cannot trust with those things yet be trusted by us and sent to Parliament to make the laws we live under?

"Now, Mr. Chairman, it appears to me in this country you are in much the same position. * * * What you have to realize is that your political differences must be cast aside as we have cast them aside; that you must nail the colors of Labor Union to the mast and make that your politics."*

The Canadian Fraternal Delegate, W. R. Trotter, strongly supported the same point of view, saying:

"The previous convention of the Congress [Canadian] took an important step, the step of going into independent political action. In a new country like ours * * * it is a bigger problem even than you have in the States to take independent political action. * * * We decided for independent political action, however, as our only hope. We hope in the future to get on the inside and look out instead of being, as now, on the outside looking in."†

At the 1908 Convention of the A. F. of L., British Delegate J. H. Skinner spoke approvingly of the alliance of Socialism and trade unionism:

"The Labor Party consists, not only of trade unionists, but Socialists as well. The main body of the Socialists in Great Britain are allied to the Labor Party, and they are as anxious to maintain it as are the more moderate section styled the trade unionists. We are proud of the alliance between the Socialists and the Labor Party. I believe a great deal of the work that has been accomplished in an advance direction for the workers of Great Britain has been due to the sacrifices, the hard work and the energy of the Socialists who are connected with it. * * * A few years ago we had to fight our battles with our hands tied behind our backs, and you are in that position today. * * * When you have better laws you can spend the time, money and attention you now spend on trying to get them in remedying other evils. Then you will be able to do something to make the conditions of life better for children, the unemployed and the aged toilers."‡

Even more emphatic to the same effect is the testimony of British Delegate J. R. Clynes at the following convention:

"The Labor Party has been the chief agency for expressing in the public and political life of Britain the claims and desires

*Report, 1907 Convention, p. 134.

†*Idem*, p. 140.

‡Report, 1908 Convention, p. 119.

of the organized workers of our country. * * * Our Labor Party is an alliance of these extreme forces. The moderate trades unionist joins hands with even the extreme Socialist. * * * It is not a party which takes from either the freedom each has a right to retain. The alliance reserves to the trade unionist the liberty to go on with his industrial work, to preach combination, secure gains for the workshop, and secure better laws in Parliament. It leaves the Socialist free to spread his ideals, to teach his principles and to strengthen his organization. Freedom of opinion in no sense involving sacrifice of principle on the part of either has been the foundation, has been the safety valve of this Labor Party existing in Great Britain today. * * * In our country now the men are looked upon as enemies of the workers who would seek to divide or in any sense sow the seeds of division among the Socialist and trades unions who have so long worked in helpful harmony in our land. The cry has been often raised, of course, that trades unions should have nothing to do with politics. We did not bring party politics into the trades unions in our country, but we brought the trades unions into Parliamentary action. That Parliamentary action has not lessened industrial activity; it has not diminished our pride in the trades unions; our ardor for the cause of combination in the workshop is no less. Our trades unionism is not thrown overboard because we have taken upon our ship the instrument of Parliamentary action.”*

In 1910 British Fraternal Delegate Ben Turner showed how sweeping had been the political success of Labor :

“There is not a town or village now in the north of England or in most portions of Wales and Scotland where on school boards and town and county councils we have not men and women from our own body—men from the mills and mines and forges, the actual daily toilers—who are members of these public bodies.”†

His colleague, W. Brace, declared :

“Side by side with its industrial effort, the trades union movement must be political as well. It is bound to be such in character. The day has gone by, in my judgment, when trades unionists can afford to ignore their position in the political life of the nation. Capital is represented in the British House of Commons and powerfully entrenched in the House of Lords. Labor, therefore, must not be content to stand in the outer lobby of Parliament asking other people to do for it what it should do for itself. Labor must go on the floor of Parliament and demand in the name of the organized workers that its desires be carried into effect. * * * No Parliament can translate into law the real desires and necessities

*Report, 1909 Convention, pp. 153, 154, 156.

†Report, 1910 Convention, p. 192.

ties of the people unless men are there who are of the people, bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh, and who in their own lives and experience can tell the legislative authorities exactly the views and aspirations of those who are doing the work for the nation.”*

That British Columbia was going through the same experience as England was shown in the testimony of Canadian Delegate R. P. Pettipiece at the same convention.

“As with the workers elsewhere,” he said, “we never do anything until we are compelled to. We were compelled to take some radical and revolutionary steps there. When James Dunsmuir closed down the mines on Vancouver Island because the miners had asked for an increase in pay and had gone on strike he said to the striking miners through a royal commission: ‘These mines are mine. Can I not do as I like with my own property?’ That statement, Mr. Chairman, is correct, no matter how brutal it may be. If the workers will walk to the ballot box on election day and confer the power to write law and make it legal for them to own these things we must give them the right to do as they like with their own property. * * * That famous declaration in British Columbia gave birth to the Socialist Party. * * * Since 1903 the Socialist Party has grown from a little group of less than a dozen men in Vancouver to a party that polled 21 per cent of the votes in that county, despite the fact that we had only twenty-one candidates running in forty-two constituencies. In British Columbia the Socialist Party has the distinguished honor of having one of its members the Parliamentary leader of His Majesty’s loyal opposition. * * * All the legislation that has been referred to by my comrades and all I could refer to that has been passed in British Columbia came after the appearance of a few labor members in the house.”†

Once more the wonderful success of British Labor in Parliament was testified to when, at the 1911 Convention of the A. F. of L., Fraternal Delegate G. H. Roberts declared:

“I have watched my colleagues of the Labor Party * * * wringing concessions that would never have been possible had not our labor men been in the committee room and on the floor of the House of Commons to make manifest our desire. * * * We believe the legislation which is passed and the way in which our laws are administered have a great bearing on our wage stand-

*Report, 1910 Convention, p. 194.

†*Idem*, p. 198.

ards. Furthermore, we claim the working classes have a right to positions inside the House of Commons. * * * I am proud of the Labor Party, and I am proud of my class because they have demonstrated to the others that there is a genius, a working-class loyalty to be found in our ranks. * * *"

At the same convention the Canadian delegate, William Glockling, said:

"We have on every occasion endeavored to bring about a state of things which would allow the people to elect their own members. We have not yet been as successful as we should be. * * * We go periodically to our Federal Parliament and to our Provincial Parliaments with bowed heads and hats in hand, asking, or rather pleading, for legislation. * * * I think it is essential for the workers of the Dominion to have their interests represented as are the interests of the men in the Old Country."†

In 1912 the American delegates to the British Trades Union Congress, G. L. Berry and J. H. Walker, had to confess as follows:

"There can be no denial of the fact that the Labor Party under the direction of the Congress has made remarkable strides in forcing home needful legislation for the workers of that country. * * * During strikes, on account of having their own political party, they have readier access to and more influence with the government than they had previously, and through government investigations and otherwise making public the situation from a worker's point of view, substantial assistance has been rendered towards getting the disputes settled favorably to the unions. * * * Because many of the political questions and remedial laws affect seriously the health, safety, hours of labor and even the wages of the members, as well as the care of their children and their education, also their own living, in case of incapacity through injury, disease or old age, the members of the unions there are intensely interested in seeing that everything is done that can be done for themselves by the use of their votes. The organization of their political party, the success achieved by it, and the continual exchange of views among the members, as well as the work of education carried on by the Labor Party, have done an immense work in educating the workers politically. Old prejudices and superstitions on this subject have been eliminated, and a great impetus has been given to the labor movement in its every phase. The workers have

*Report, 1911 Convention, pp. 170, 171.

†*Idem*, pp. 176-177.

been inspired with a stronger faith in themselves and they have been given greater hope than ever before that they will accomplish the things which as trade unionists they set out to do. * * **

At the same convention, Robert Smillie, one of the British delegates, after recounting the spread of Socialist feeling in the trade-union movement in England, declared:

"But I think that something in our country at least requires to be nationalized in addition to the land, mines, railways and means of production. We intend to nationalize the British House of Commons in the very near future. I quite admit that we could not secure justice for the workers from our House of Commons as at present constituted, because whatever name our politicians may give themselves and their parties, they represent the exploiting classess all the time in both sides of the House of Commons. To nationalize railways, the workers would not get a fair chance from a legislature such as ours is at present composed, but side by side with preaching the utility and the necessity for the public ownership of the mines we are preaching the necessity of full representation of the common people of our country in the legislature of our country, and we are very hopeful that in the very near future we will be able to strengthen our forces, because organized labor has given up all hopes of any substantial legislation, any social or economic legislation, from the two political parties, and our only hope is the formation of a party of our own. * * * We, I think, are perfectly capable of forming our own party and of working out our own salvation without depending * * * on either of the two political parties. We have been deceived quite long enough by the promises and non-fulfillment of the pledges which have been given to us in the past by the political parties, who have ridden into power, either one party or another, on the shoulders of the working classes. * * * The pledges they have never intended to redeem and which they never have redeemed, and which they never will redeem."†

The remarks of his colleague, James A. Seddon, were pointed and witty:

"The Labor Party was a creation of the trades union movement, it is its child today and is working together unanimously for the great problems that confront the industrial workers in Great Britain today. The Labor Party in the House of Commons began, as it was natural it should begin, by directing the attention of those politicians who generally have their eyes in the ends of the earth and their hands in the workers' pockets; we began to point out to

*Report, p. 205.

†Report, 1912 Convention, p. 195.

them that it did not matter very much whether the sun never set on the Empire or not if it did not shine in our alley. * * **

I have quoted elsewhere the words of T. Grenall, the British delegate to the A. F. of L. Convention of 1913, but his colleague, I. H. Gwinne, also paid a tribute to political action.

"Whatever may be your position in this country," he said, "there is one thing certain—that the trades-union movement in the old country would never have accomplished what it has, it could not be the influence it is today, and could never have attained the position it has attained, apart from its direct political action."†

At the same convention, Gus Francq, the Canadian Fraternal Delegate, declared:

"It is generally admitted by the labor movement the world over that, whatever may be its own strength in the economic field, it is absolutely indispensable that it should be followed by political action; indeed, how can interests and positions so dearly bought be safeguarded, if, by a stroke of the pen, legislators can destroy them?" After recounting the political advantages gained in Canada, he continued: "All this goes to show that, if trade unionism were combined with wise political action, the labor movement of Canada and the United States would be master of the situation. * * * When I think of the difficulties created for the labor unions on this side of the 45th parallel, by the famous Sherman antitrust act, * * * I say that it is high time for trade unionism to realize the benefits to be derived from the presence of labor members in our various governments. * * * I believe that, in order to make the workmen understand the necessity of the political movement it would be wise that the unions affiliated to this Federation, whose constitutions forbid dealing with political questions, should do away with such restrictions and insert on the order of the day of their local unions a clause for 'Discussion of legislation affecting workmen.'"‡

It might be well to end this testimony with the glowing tribute of an American delegate to the British Trades Union Congress as given in his report to the 1913 Convention of the A. F. of L.

**Idem*, pp. 208-209.

†Report, 1913 Convention, p. 182.

‡*Idem*, pp. 199-200.

"After carefully looking into the workings of the British Trades Union Congress and its political wing, the Labor Party," said Louis Kemper, "we find that the success of organized labor in Great Britain is due largely to the efforts and activity of the Labor Party. Another gratifying feature is the fact that the members of the Labor Party and the Socialists work hand in hand for the common good, without any strife, discord or friction, and in perfect harmony one with the other. * * * Without the Labor Party, the British Trades Union Congress, and, in fact, the entire labor movement of Britain would lose much of its effectiveness."*

CHAPTER VI.

THE FUTURE POLITICS OF LABOR IN AMERICA.

It is unfortunate that both the Socialist Trade Unionists and their opponents felt unable at the last convention of the A. F. of L. to support the resolution of George L. Berry, of the International Printing Pressmen and Assistants' Union. He urged the A. F. of L., it will be remembered, to call a conference of delegates from the national Socialist Party, the organized state and national bodies of the Woman's Suffrage League, the farmers' national and state unions, and the railroad men's brotherhoods, for the purpose of drafting a working agreement that would provide for joint action upon the political field. It is unfortunate that such a gathering cannot be held, even were it to result in nothing more than several days of thoughtful consideration of the great political problems that confront Labor. If the spirit of faction and personal antagonism would only yield even for a few days to an ardent desire for unity among all the sections of the American labor movement, such a gathering might have results as revolutionary as the convention which gave to America its political institutions. There might be written there a new declaration of independence, which would free Labor forever from a corrupting and demoralizing dependence upon the capitalist parties. However, the American Federation of Labor decided by a large vote against calling such a conference, and that may perhaps have been a wise action, considering the present state of the movement and the bitterness of some factions in the movement. Nevertheless, in dealing with the future politics of Labor in America, it

may be well to review here very briefly a few questions that might present themselves to such a convention.

The workingmen there would have the choice of several methods of attacking capitalism. First, they might take the position of the French Syndicalists by declaring that they could accomplish everything that Labor desires through industrial solidarity. They might refuse to take any part in politics. They might decide to go to the extreme with the Anarchists by refusing even to vote. They might scoff at all political parties and decide definitely to decline to send any labor men to Congress or to make the slightest effort to alter the laws of their country. They might resolve, with the Anarchists and Syndicalists, that so long as we have not industrial freedom, political liberty is a mere phrase. This position would have at least the advantage of clearness, and it would impress upon workingmen the fact that it is their supreme duty to devote their entire thought, attention, and energy to the organization of the working class on the industrial field. It is obviously true that powerful trade and industrial organizations of workmen not only do accomplish immediate reforms, such as higher wages, shorter hours, and better working conditions, but they can also exercise an influence upon the politics of a nation. A strike may be as effective for political purposes as for any other. And on more than one occasion in this country and in Europe the chief result of a strike has been an important political reform. But, in addition to such immediate benefits as might accrue from the extension of the trade and industrial organizations of the working class, there might also be the goal of the Syndicalists. In other words, it might be argued that some day, when Labor had completely consolidated its forces, the working class could, by means of a general strike, take all

power, political and industrial, into its hands. This is one choice that might be made by such a convention, although it is most improbable, since the American labor movement has never, at any time, shown much inclination toward a strictly non-political working-class movement.

The second choice that might be made by such a convention would be to endorse and to continue the present methods of the A. F. of L., which combine both industrial and political activity. These methods have been sufficiently dealt with in the foregoing pages, and I shall only briefly review them here. The chief emphasis is placed upon the organization of craft unions in all the trades and industries of the nation. An effort is then made to unite the separate crafts into international unions and to associate these unions into one great national federation. This activity is to take precedence of all other activities, but it is admitted that political action is both advisable and necessary. Instead, however, of trying to form a political party of its own, the A. F. of L. seeks, through its legislative agents, to obtain laws favorable to Labor. The Trade Unionists are supposed to remain members of the capitalist parties, but they are instructed to give all aid to the friends of Labor and to seek in every manner to defeat the enemies of Labor. They are to endeavor to have the capitalist parties put up for office prominent Trade Unionists in order that these men shall, when elected, represent Labor in the various legislatures and in the administration of the Government.

The third choice which such a convention might make would be to launch an independent labor party. They could resolve to do as the British, the Belgians, the Australians, and other foreign workers have done, organize the workers politically, adopt a comprehensive platform, devise methods of raising ample campaign funds, and put into the field

in all sections of the country their own candidates for office. They could go in for strictly independent labor politics and refuse to ally or affiliate themselves in any manner with the capitalist parties. In other words, they could leave those parties as strikers now leave the shops. They could insist that every loyal Trade Unionist should support the independent labor party with the same zeal and earnestness that he now supports his comrades on strike. In this manner they could own, finance and control a party of Labor, and, by the tremendous volume of their votes, they could elect to public office thousands of trade union men. Being the masters of their own party, and able to control the political fortunes of all its candidates, they could see that the men elected by the party remain faithful and carry out to the smallest detail its commands.

As a rule, the Labor parties of Europe developed directly out of the existing labor organizations. And that is, of course, the natural way for such a party to develop. Marx and Engels never gave up the hope that the American trade unions would one day launch a party of their own, while Karl Kautsky, the eminent German Socialist, as late as three or four years ago, declared that the mass political movement of the workers might even yet come in America through the A. F. of L. And no doubt such an independent labor party would have developed out of the American trade unions had not Mr. Gompers blocked the way. Had the officials of the A. F. of L., in the late eighties, supported with enthusiasm and loyalty the spontaneous political uprising of the working class which occurred in those years, there would never have existed in this country a separate Socialist Party. There would not have been today two great armies of workingmen fighting for practically the same things, but with leaders more or less antagonistic to

each other. In the opinion of the Socialist, such an independent party would have become a Socialist party, but the rank and file, as well as the officials of such a party, would have been largely the same as those in the trade-union movement. We should then have had the same unity here that exists in every other country. It is unfortunate that the Socialist movement was not allowed to develop in this natural way, as an evolution out of the existing trade unions. However, such a convention might discuss the possibility of following here, even at this late date, the example of the European movement.

There is a fourth choice that might be made by such a convention, and that is to support the existing Socialist Party. It might decide to have two working-class movements, one devoting all its energies to the building up of the economic organizations of the working class, the other devoting all its attention to developing the political power of the working class. They might urge every Trade Unionist to become a member of the Socialist Party and every Socialist to become a member of a trade union. They could insist that the two movements should be kept distinct, one from the other, in order that each should be free and untrammelled in the particular field of action in which it is battling. They might arrange that these two great organizations of the working class should frequently confer together, and, while not interfering with the internal policies of one another, that they should on all occasions support each other. At the elections the Trade Unionist would be expected to give all aid and support to the Socialists, while, at the time of strike, the Socialist would be expected to give all possible aid to the strikers. In others words, there would be two great unions of the working class, the one devoting its attention to building up political unity, the other

giving its attention to building up industrial unity. The Socialist Party would be expected to carry out all the political demands of the trade-union movement. It would represent in public office the entire labor movement, and, while fighting in present society for all those immediate benefits sought by Labor for the improvement of its present condition, it would seek also to municipalize and nationalize the instruments of Labor.

No doubt, such a plan would be very bitterly combatted by Mr. Gompers and others holding his views. Yet it is a fact, which no one knows better than he, that the ideas, the program and the tactics of the Socialist Party of America are in all essentials identical with those of every labor party in Europe. It is an integral part of the international movement, to which all those parties are affiliated, and its principles and methods are exactly the same as those of the labor parties of Europe, which the mass of Trade Unionists support. No matter what the views of any American Trade Unionist are, he could not devise a strictly independent labor party that would differ materially from that of the Socialist Party. Even were such a party to differ slightly at the beginning from the present Socialist Party, within a few years their principles and methods would be identical. Moreover, the Socialist Party is already in the field. The enormous financial expenditure, the tremendous labor and sacrifice that are necessary to start a party of the masses, have been borne for years by the Socialists. And they have succeeded in building up a national movement, with its local and state organizations throughout the land. The party has already elected its men to the various state legislatures, and most of these men are also Trade Unionists. It has captured several important cities, and a number of smaller ones, and it polls in the

nation approximately one million votes. It has one hundred and twenty-five weekly papers and many monthlies. It has propaganda journals in all languages and daily papers in several languages. Some of the highest officials in the American Federation of Labor are members of this party, and a considerable mass of its dues-payers are Trade Unionists. Its labor and political record, wherever it has held office, is both clear and clean. In many town councils and state legislatures its representatives have introduced measures so vital to the welfare of the labor movement and of the working class that no one can be in doubt as to exactly where the Socialist Party stands. It is a labor party, more or less dominated even today by Trade Unionists, and all it needs to make it rank with its capitalist rivals in this country and to make it as powerful as the great labor parties of Europe, which I have described, is the united support of all American labor organizations. These are the actual facts, and, if such a convention decided to scrap all this machinery and to form a new party, it would be doing about as foolish a thing as to scrap the machinery of the A. F. of L. and to form a new trade-union movement. The fourth choice, then, which would present itself to those at such a gathering would be to support with all their power and strength the present Socialist Party. They could enter it, make it theirs, use its machinery to develop a great mass movement that would include practically the entire working class. They could then send into all the town councils and legislatures Trade Unionists and Socialists who would fight with all their combined power in the interest of the toilers of America.

Unfortunately, choices such as I have indicated here are not easily made. It is rare that several factions meet in convention, harmonize their diverse views, or take any

action, no matter how simple, without much discussion and some dissension. Certainly, it is not likely that the Trade Unionists and Socialists here will ever meet in one great convention to decide definitely upon their political tactics and to choose with all the care and wisdom they possess the best and most effective methods to accomplish their common ends. Great movements do not seem to come about in this deliberate manner. They rather evolve out of the sweat and blood, the toil and anguish of the multitudes struggling blindly toward the light. Probably, then, we shall never coldly and deliberately decide upon the wisest course for us to pursue. It is far more likely that we shall be buffeted and bruised and driven by the great economic forces of our time and by the opposition of our enemy until we learn the wisdom of harmony and the value of solidarity. Besides, there is an obstacle which blocks the way. We are not now entirely free to choose without prejudice what we should most desire. We have got into ruts, we have developed our jealousies and our antagonisms. We have enemies even in the labor movement itself, and we shall all have to be put into the melting pot before there can be fused into one united whole the many factions that now fight to their ruin and ours.

X I think I have made clear in the foregoing pages that the actual situation which confronts the labor movement of America and temporarily blocks its way is largely of Mr. Gompers' making. He, more than anyone else up to the present, has written the decisions of the largest section of that movement. He has been powerful enough to overcome all opposition, and his own will has almost invariably prevailed. So far as the first choice that I have mentioned above is concerned, Mr. Gompers has refused to consider it, and, following him, so has the A. F. of L. Although

almost a Syndicalist in his theory of the labor movement, he has been unable to adhere to this theory in practice. He has been prevented by necessity from making the first choice. He has mixed his Syndicalism with politics, and, through thirty-three years of trial and tribulation, has pretty clearly demonstrated to all of us the folly of that. Throughout the same period he has persistently and effectively blocked the way of Labor from making the third choice. By his inability to follow the first, by his failure in the second, and by his staving off the third until it is too late, he has made it now almost imperative for the American labor movement to choose the last. Nothing could have been farther away from his intention or desire; yet the fact is that the labor movement of America has now only one course left to it. Whether or not this will be considered by some to be unfortunate, the only thing that remains is for the Trade Unionists to do here what the Trade Unionists are doing in nearly all other countries with such splendid success. They must support the Socialist Party.

I do not mean that somewhere and sometime the A. F. of L. will resolve formally to coöperate with the Socialist Party. That may perhaps never happen. What I mean is, that the movement now going on in all parts of the country will continue to go on until practically the entire mass of Trade Unionists are also Socialists. For ten years or more the American Federation of Labor has been furnishing multitudes of recruits to the Socialist Party. In Wisconsin the Trade Unionists and Socialists are closely united. In Milwaukee, in Butte, in Schenectady, and in thirty or more other cities the Trade Unionists have backed the Socialist Party almost to a man and won splendid victories. In hundreds of other industrial cities and towns,

where the Socialist Party now polls a big vote, although not large enough to win, the Socialists and Trade Unionists work together in perfect harmony. The State Federations of Labor of Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and of several other states are officered by Socialist Trade Unionists. As evidence of the more favorable attitude taken by Trade Unionists toward Socialism, we find the brewers, the bakers, the tailors, the flint-glass workers, the machinists, the coal miners, the metal miners, the painters, the carpenters, the cigarmakers, the brick, tile and terra cotta workers, the cloth hat and cap makers, the electrical workers and the printers electing Socialists to high official positions in their unions. It is quite remarkable to anyone who carefully studies the growth of Socialism in the unions to see what immense progress has been made in that direction during the last few years. The mass of Trade Unionists are forcing their way into independent labor politics, and the only opportunity of that sort which is now offered them is through the Socialist Party. Consequently, both by reason of its very nature, and owing to the support of the Trade Unionists, that party is recognized today as the independent labor party of America.

That anyone should have expected any other outcome seems a little strange to the Socialists. Abroad a Trade Unionist who is not a Socialist is somewhat of a curiosity. When a workingman in Europe speaks of "the party" or of "our party," he means the Socialist Party, but here workingmen who do not read Socialist papers and books rarely realize how identical in many respects the Socialist and trade-union movements are. Even the ideals of Socialism and Trade Unionism are much the same. The Trade Unionist believes that he should get the full product of his toil, and he is striving day in and day out to gain more

and more of that product. He strikes for shorter hours, better conditions and higher wages, always with the idea that he is gradually, by such battles, gaining more and more of what his labor produces. He realizes perfectly that it is impossible for him to receive the full product of his toil so long as the Carnegies, the Vanderbilts, the Rockefellers, the Goulds, the Astors, and the other great land-owners, mine-owners, and mill-owners can take untold millions out of industry. He is convinced that the immense profits of the Standard Oil, of the Steel Trust, the Beef Trust, and the railroads, must somehow come out of the labor which has produced the wealth of those great industries. He perhaps has no plan which seems to him certain to accomplish a juster distribution of wealth, but he knows by experience that strikes and trade-union activity gain for him larger and larger returns for his labor. Naturally he holds fast to a method which has achieved something for him, but that does not mean that he is content with the little he gains, or that he will not support his strikes with his ballot as soon as he is convinced that it is advisable and necessary.

In Mr. Gompers' report to the American Federation of Labor at Detroit in 1899 he views with alarm the concentration of capital in this country. He is of the opinion that the people will be compelled to endure the corrupting influence of the trusts in politics and the domination of the State by wealth

"until the toilers are organized and educated to the degree that they shall know that the state is by right theirs, and finally and justly come to their own, while never relaxing in their efforts to secure the very best possible economic, social and material improvement in their condition."*

*Report, p. 15.

In the same address and in his testimony before the Industrial Commission of 1900, Mr. Gompers expresses the opinion that the trade unions will go on

"organizing, agitating and educating, in order that material improvement may keep pace with industrial development, until the time when the workers, who will then form nearly the whole people, develop their ability to administer the functions of government in the interest of all."*

We see, then, that Mr. Gompers himself, although declaring at all times that he is not a Socialist, believes that in the future, after a due process of evolution, the workers will have to administer the functions of government in the interest of all. The process by which he seeks to obtain this end is very similar to the one proposed by the Syndicalists, but the end and aim contemplated by Mr. Gompers is very much the same as that contemplated by the Socialists.^(a)

However, Mr. Gompers' personal views are of less importance than the declarations of the trade unions themselves. In recent years definite Socialist principles have been avowed by a large number of labor organizations. The Wisconsin, Michigan, Iowa, Nevada, Minnesota, and other State Federations of Labor have passed Socialist declarations. Central Federated Unions, such as Cleveland, St. Louis, Milwaukee, Columbus, Erie, Wilkesbarre, Haverhill, Brockton, Terre Haute, Schenectady, Butte,

*Report of Industrial Commission, 1900, Vol. VII, p. 656.

(a) I do not wish to give the impression that Mr. Gompers is a Socialist. He is not only confused, but he is also wholly misinformed regarding the meaning and purposes of Socialism. That no one is so blind as he who will not see is made clear once more by the publication of the debate between Mr. Gompers and Mr. Morris Hillquit before the Commission on Industrial Relations. This debate, under the title, "The Double Edge of Labor's Sword," can now be obtained from the Socialist Party, National Office, Chicago.

Bridgeport, and many others, have endorsed Socialism. In their statement of principles, the International Union of Textile Workers, the Amalgamated Glass Workers, the Amalgamated Wood Workers, the Journeymen Bakers and Confectioners, the United Brewery Workmen, the American Flint Glass Workers, the Boot and Shoe Workers' Union, the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, the Brotherhood of Boiler Makers and Iron Ship Builders, the United Mine Workers, and the Western Federation of Miners, have all definitely declared that only by the abolition of the competitive system and the establishment of Socialism could the working class be permanently benefited.

Several of the unions mentioned state as their deliberate conviction that

"the earth, together with all its wealth, belongs to mankind. The results and triumphs of civilization have been achieved through the course of thousands of years and with the assistance of all nations. The organized workers will come to carry into reality these principles, and they will establish a state of affairs under which everyone will enjoy the fruits of their labor."*

The Flint Glass Workers call upon the working men of the world "to unite under the banner of International Socialism,"† while the Engineers give as one of their chief objects

"to assist in altering the competitive system of industry to a coöperative system in order to secure the full share of the fruits of labor."‡

The Boiler Makers declare that they look forward to

"the abolition of classes, the restoration of the land and all the means of production, and distribution to the people as a collective body, and the substitution of the coöperative commonwealth for the present state of planless production, industrial war, and social disorder."§

*Report of Industrial Commission, 1901, p. 78.

†*Idem*, p. 176.

‡*Idem*, p. 223.

§*Idem*, p. 228.

The Boot and Shoe Workers declare for

"the ultimate abolition of the competitive wage system and the substitution therefor of a collective ownership by the people of all means of production, distribution, transportation, communication, and exchange."*

The International Association of Metal Mechanics does not declare for democratic Socialism, but it is in favor of governmental control of railway, telegraph and telephone, while the Metal Polishers favor the government ownership of national monopolies. The Machinists' Union declares that it is impossible for its members to obtain the full reward of their labor except by united action and it urges its members to

"set about securing the nomination and election of pronounced trade unionists in municipal, state, and national legislatures," in order that it may "not be necessary to humiliate our citizenship in the future with fruitless petitions."†

The Operative Plasterers' Association urges the operation and ownership of mines by the State.

These and other unions, such as the Ladies' Garment Workers, the United Cloth Hat and Cap Makers, the Carriage and Wagon Workers, and the Pattern Makers, all express principles in harmony with Socialism. In many unions the Socialists are in the majority, while in the Cigar Makers, the Painters, the Bricklayers, the Carpenters, and the Printers, probably thirty per cent of the members are active Socialists. Several important trade-union journals are urging incessantly the need of united political action and advocating earnestly the political objects of the Socialists. Many of the State Federations and City Federations, as well as the International Unions, have elected to their highest official positions trade union Socialists. The Ma-

*Report of Industrial Commission, p. 52.

†*Idem*, p. 218.

chinists, the Tailors, the Miners, the Brewery Workmen, the Flint Glass Workers, the Bakers and Confectioners, have as their chief officials prominent members of the Socialist Party. Altogether it seems, then, that in recent years both the trade-union and Socialist movements are coming to recognize the need of united effort and the identity of their ultimate aims.

If the ideals of the Socialists and Trade Unionists, then, are almost identical, their analyses of the conflict in present society are not dissimilar. For instance, there is no thoughtful Trade Unionist or Socialist who believes that there can now be harmony between Capital and Labor. In answer to the *Call*, the New York Socialist daily, which had accused Mr. Gompers of believing in harmony between Capital and Labor, he declared in the *American Federationist* of February, 1912:

"Never in the history of the American Federation of Labor, never in my life, have I ever said or hinted that there was or could be that 'harmony between labor and capital.' I challenge the *Call* or any other socialist mouthpiece to point to one utterance showing the contrary. Acting upon the theory that a lie repeated often enough some will believe that it is true, Socialists have for years asserted that the trade unionists, and I particularly, have declared that there exists, or should exist, 'harmony between capital and labor.' * * * No man who pretends to be a leader of public opinion today advocates harmony between privilege and privation, legalized robbery and honest citizenship, swollen fortunes and scant wages."*

These are vigorous words in support of the view held universally by Socialists, that present society is torn asunder by a bitter struggle of the classes. But even more to the point than Mr. Gompers' words is the trade-union movement itself. It is organized exclusively by workingmen, and Trade Unionists are extremely careful to keep the employer and his influences out of the union. Even the super-

**American Federationist*, Vol. XIX, pp. 140-141.

intendents and managers of large industries are excluded from the trade unions. Every workman and every employer knows that the trade union exists to improve the conditions of the toilers and that this usually happens at the expense of the employers. Every strike is a battlefield in which the employees and employer are contending for victory, and however much friendliness may exist at other times between master and men, both sides to this controversy realize that when the strike is on the fight will be conducted to the bitter end. The Socialist may philosophize more than the Trade Unionist about the existence of a class struggle in society, but the latter is having more experience on the field of battle.

"As a matter of fact," once declared Mr. Gompers, "there is no other organization of labor in the entire world * * * so class-conscious as are the trade unions."*

✓ The Trade Unionist is actually fighting the class struggle, and it is the battles between employers' associations and federalized trade unions that supply to the Socialist the best evidence that society today is torn by a conflict between Capital and Labor.

We see, then, that not only are the ideals of the two movements very similar, but that their analysis of the conflict which exists in modern society is identical. The only variation between the views of the Trade Unionist and the Socialist comes, then, in the manner of attack. The Socialist is convinced that the Trade Unionist should not only battle with the individual employer, but that he should also seek to meet the employers as a whole, as represented by the State. Here capitalism makes the laws, writes the title deeds of wealth, and controls all that machinery of Government which makes it possible for Capital to dominate both

**American Federationist*, August, 1897.

the industrial and the political institutions of society. The Socialist urges the masses to use the immense volume of votes at their disposal to capture political power, to change the laws of the country, and administer the State and society in the interest of the workers. What possible antagonism can exist between a trade-union movement, which is struggling for shorter hours, better conditions, and higher wages, and a Socialist movement, which is endeavoring to organize men politically for the purpose of controlling the legislatures, the courts, and the executives of the nation? The two movements and struggles do not in the least interfere with each other. By no flight of the imagination nor by any possible perversion can they be considered antagonistic. They aid each other, supplement each other, and, as a matter of fact, cannot fully succeed without the support of each other.

Curiously enough, the tactics and methods used by Trade Unionists to battle with the employer on the industrial field are identical with those used by the Socialists to battle with the masters of society on the political field. As the Trade Unionist seeks to organize all the workers engaged in the industries of the nation, so the Socialist seeks to organize all the workers who vote in the nation. As the Trade Unionist seeks to unite men into one body so that they shall be able to strike together and thus to enforce their demands, so the Socialist seeks to unite men into one body so that they may be able to vote together and thus control the political life of the nation. The need of the Trade Unionist is an all-extensive Trade Unionism. The need of the Socialist is an all-extensive political unionism. The one pleads for unity in the trade and industry; the other urges unity in politics. Both should exist supplementary or complementary to each other, in order that men

might battle both as toilers in the shops and as citizens in the nation, for the complete emancipation of Labor from the tyranny of capitalism.

Every trade union is a revolt against industrial slavery. The workers have been forced by the bitterest of experience to realize the folly of leaving to the employers all authority as to the number of hours, the rate of wages, or the conditions of employment. So long as these matters were left to the employers, the workers were compelled to suffer incredibly long hours, wretched conditions of employment, and starvation wages. The modern trade-union movement arose as a kind of rebellion, not only against these conditions themselves, but also against the authority and power of the masters to dictate such conditions. There is no way to think of the modern trade-union movement except as a direct challenge to the industrial authority of the employer. The Federation of Labor itself is an attempt to bring together the multitude of isolated trade organizations, to mould them into one great national independent body which shall constitute a hostile power to all the forces that now declare that the masters and not the men shall decide how many hours the toiler shall work, at what price he shall sell his labor, and under what conditions he shall do his work.

It is perfectly clear that when a workman stands alone he is incapable of opposing the will of the boss. If he does not like his hours or his wages or his conditions of employment, he is told to quit, and that is the end of his protest and of him. It is only when all the workers of a trade get together that they can demand concessions from the employers and obtain them. It is only when the workers of a trade are able to withdraw all the laborers from the shops of any employer and thus completely paralyze his in-

dustrial operations that they have the power to decide how many hours they will sell each day of their lives, how much labor they are willing to give for certain wages, and under what conditions they will work in the shops. This is what the modern trade union means, but when the Socialist attempts to carry the same thought and method into the political field, Mr. Gompers is horrified and declares with vehemence that the whole project is chimerical, impossible, ridiculous. If organization has achieved a measure of industrial freedom, why is it not possible for organization to achieve some measure of political freedom? In any case, why should he who pleads with the workers to organize themselves in order to struggle against industrial slavery, protest against and even ridicule the Socialists, who urge those same workers to launch their own independent, self-reliant political union, in order to struggle against the political authority of the masters? Nothing is more astonishing to the Socialist than to see certain eminent trade-union leaders argue so ably, clearly, and forcefully the principles of Trade Unionism, only to throw up their hands in dismay when the same principles are employed for building up political unionism.

Mr. John Mitchell once gave an interesting interview to

(a) At the convention of the A. F. of L., 1903, Mr. Mitchell stated his views very concisely as follows: "I have no desire to discuss the relative merits of trades unions and Socialism. I recognize the right of every man to believe as he pleases. I give to no man, nor to any organization the right to say to me or to my organization what political party we should belong to or for what candidates we shall cast our votes.

* * * * *

"It would be a sad day, indeed, if trades unions were made the tail end of a political organization. I am not going to place in the same category all political organizations. I am free to admit that there is a great difference between the old party organizations and that of the socialists. * * *"

the Chicago *Daily Socialist*, in which he said that Socialists were often unjust in their attacks upon Trade Unionists who exercise their political rights as independent voters.^(a) He expressed some indignation that any labor leader or Trade Unionist should be criticised for voting for any party whose politics he approved of. There are many besides Mr. Mitchell who hold similar views and who lose patience with the Socialist when he condemns the Trade Unionist for voting how he pleases and for whom he pleases. But what response would one get if he asked Mr. Mitchell: "Do you believe that a workingman should exercise his right to work or not to work regardless of the interest of his fellows? Should each individual workman have the right to work when he pleases, where he pleases, and for whom he pleases? When a body of men decide to strike, is an individual workman justified in standing by the employers and in assisting them to break the strike?" Mr. Mitchell would, of course, answer in the negative, because he sees perfectly well that without unity on the industrial field the cause of the worker is hopeless. He would make the very excellent argument that the Trade Unionist is not fighting for his individual self but for all the men in the shop. He would declare that the striker is not only battling in his own defense, but also in defense of the "scab." Consequently, he believes that the Trade Unionist is justified in his bitterness against "scabs" and he admits that a workman who assists an employer at the time of a strike is a traitor to his class. This is sound Trade Unionism, but, curiously enough, when the same thought is carried into politics, Mr. Mitchell cannot see that exactly the same principle is involved.

*Proceedings of A. F. of L. Convention, 1903, pp. 191-192.

The individual workman cannot bargain advantageously with the employer, and that is why he unites with his fellows. But is it not also true that the individual voter cannot bargain advantageously with the political boss, and is not that an excellent reason why he should unite with his fellows? If the individual is powerless in the shop, he is no less powerless in politics. If, for instance, an individual workman were to go to a political boss to demand labor laws, or to protest against oppression and injustice, is it likely that that individual voter would get much satisfaction? Of course, if he did not like being snubbed by the political boss, he could at the next election vote for the rival of that boss. But the individual voter, when he takes his one little vote and quits, has about as much effect upon the political boss as the individual workman has upon the employer when he takes his tools and quits. Both the employer and the politician not only refuse to listen to individuals, but, in the majority of cases, they have not the slightest concern when an irate individual decides to quit. It is only when men are organized that they can exercise any influence upon employers or machine politicians. The difference, then, between Mr. Mitchell and the Socialists is this, that he believes in unity only on the industrial field, while the Socialists believe in unity on both the industrial and the political field. Certainly, no man who knows the facts can doubt that wherever Labor is united politically, it exercises tremendous power. It forces concessions that are simply incredible to the American workmen who have not yet organized themselves politically. I have already shown how the great political unions of European workers influence the policies of every government of Europe, and it is perfectly obvious that no such power could exist if every Trade Unionist abroad felt that he had the right to vote for

any party or any individual whose politics he approved of.

To every workman who has been trained in the European school of Trade Unionism and Socialism, the above statements will appear commonplace. But it may be asked, Why should not the workers support as a body either the Democratic, the Republican, or the Progressive Party? Would not their number and influence be great enough to control those parties? Some Americans have no doubt of it; but the European worker would realize that such a project is hopeless as soon as he heard the answer to this one question: "Who pays their bills?" If anyone were to tell him that the biggest owner of Steel Trust stock, Mr. Frank Munsey, that Mr. Dan Hanna, another stockholder, that Mr. George W. Perkins, a director of that trust, and that Mr. William Flinn, once a political agent of that trust, supply the money of the Progressive Party, he would answer, "Well, let Munsey, Perkins, Flinn, and Hanna vote for that party." If anyone told him that the directors of the New Haven and other railroads, the directors of the insurance companies, and other pirates of Wall street, supply the campaign funds of the Republican Party, he would make the same answer. He would condemn the Democrats on the same ground when he learned that Ryan, Belmont, Roger Sullivan, and other traction kings supply the funds of the Democratic Party. He would ask nothing more, and would condemn them, just as he would condemn a trade-union which was supported out of the funds of the employers. He has learned that men and parties defend the interests of those who pay their bills, and he knows that he has nothing whatever in common with any political party or trade union that is financed by his economic enemies. The European laborer finances his own party, just as he finances his own trade union. He knows all the details of his party

organization just as he knows all the details of his trade-union organization. He makes his own political program. He selects the officials of his party and the editors of his papers. He directs the work of his representatives in the town councils, and in the national parliament, and, if he has any complaint to make about an editor or an official, he goes to the party meeting and makes it. He pays the bills—all of them. He pays not only dues to his unions, but to his party. He reads his union paper and his party paper. And, as he expects his trade-union officials to fight, day in and day out, in the interest of the men in the shop, so he expects his political officials to work, day in and day out, in town council, district legislature, and national parliament, in the interest of the working class of the nation. All this is a commonplace now to the European toiler. He knows that when he wants something done he must do it himself. He does not expect parties financed by others to serve him, and, for that reason, he enlists to fight side by side with all those who have the same material interests as his own in the industrial and political life of the nation.

The European worker has learned by experience that a party of labor exercises an immense power even when it is comparatively weak, just as a trade union exercises an immense power even when it is comparatively weak. The mere presence of a trade-union organization in any industry forces the employer to be fair to the men. It stands there as a menace, and the employer realizes that any tyranny, extortion, or oppression on his part is certain to aid the progress of that union. He treats the Trade Unionists with respect, for fear of their power, and he lays himself out to please the non-unionists for fear that they may join the union. In almost all the building trades and in many others, the wages of the non-unionists are the same as those of

the Trade Unionists. This is not because the employers are generous; it is simply that no employer in a well organized trade dares to beat down the wages of the unorganized. In the presence of even the weakest beginnings of a trade union, the employers dare not make conditions too bad, for fear of giving aid to the organization. We see this fully recognized by such reactionary papers as the *New York Times*, when it appeals to employers to share profits with their men, to take them in as stockholders, and to make the conditions of their work more pleasant, because these are the only ways of keeping them out of the unions, where they will wield a power of their own. An almost frantic appeal was made by the *Times* recently to the mine owners of Colorado to form a "benevolent union" among the employees, and, through that union, to grant them certain concessions, in order to destroy the influence of the United Mine Workers. The power of the trade union, then, is shown not merely in the benefits gained by its own members; it also exercises a tremendous influence over the entire industrial life of the nation and protects and aids millions of non-unionists. It stands as a menace to every greedy capitalist and forces him to be fairer than he would otherwise dream of being. For this reason, every trade-union leader declares very truly that the trade union is a bulwark against oppression and that every strike, whether lost or won, is a victory.

If we turn to politics, we find that political unionism exercises the same effect upon the political bosses. The Socialist Party, even in America, where it is the weakest comparatively of any country in the world, is already exercising a striking influence upon our public life. Like the trade union in the shop, it stands in politics as a menace to the old political machines. Already they are forced to exer-

cise considerable ingenuity in order to keep the workers from flocking into the Socialist Party. President Roosevelt, President Taft, and President Wilson have all emphasized the necessity for passing certain laws in the interest of the workers, in order, as one of them said, "to keep Socialism down." The Civic Federation has organized a great campaign for labor legislation and workmen's compensation, in order to keep Socialism down. Governor Glynn of New York recently declared that it was only by such remedial measures as workmen's compensation that the drift to Socialism could be stayed. This was the view of Bismarck, and it is today the view of Clemenceau, in France, as well as of Lloyd-George and of many Liberals in Great Britain. They hope that by making great concessions to Labor they can keep Labor tied to the capitalist parties and thus prevent it from wielding an independent power of its own. If the A. F. of L. has been more successful recently than formerly in obtaining the passage of legislation favorable to Labor, it is due almost entirely to this desire of the capitalist parties. The Clayton law, the workman's compensation laws, and much other legislation of recent years must be set down in part at least to the credit of the growing political power of the Socialist Party. The labor lobby has been at work for thirty-three years, but most of the success to its credit falls within the last three or four years, that is to say, after the Socialists had polled about a million votes and the possibility of working-class political unity had begun to be feared by the capitalist politicians. There is not a politician in America today who does not realize that the capitalist parties must hereafter pass more labor legislation, keep more conscientiously their pledges, and root out certain forms of political corruption if they expect to keep the

Socialists from making headway. Even some anti-Socialists are now advocating the national ownership of the railroads and of the coal mines, the municipal ownership of public utilities, and much of the great social legislation that has been recently passed in Europe, in order "to keep Socialism down."

How similar, then, are the effects of trade and political unionism! Trade unions gain much through the fear of the employer that the workers may all flock into the union. He knows that if that should happen he will have to fight with a force that he cannot control, and deal with powerful elements that can demand and gain concessions through their independent power. In the hope of avoiding such a disaster, the employer is forced to make the conditions of labor tolerable. The same is true of politics. As soon as the workers build up a reasonably strong independent party, the political boss is in a quandary. If he ignores the wishes of Labor, he knows that he will develop the independent political power of the worker. He will force more and more men into the political union. He will lose control of them, and ultimately they will destroy him. As soon as approximately one million votes were cast for the Socialist candidates, the political parties changed their attitude toward the working class. Every day now they are becoming more friendly. They are listening to its demands as never before. They are even stealing portions of the Socialist program. They realize that if they do not make concessions now, they will have to fight with a force that they cannot control and deal with a powerful Socialist party that will demand and obtain tremendous reforms by its own independent force.

As every strike is, from a certain point of view, a victory, so every Socialist campaign is, from a certain point of view, a victory. As every new trade-union member tends to increase the independence, the self-reliance, and the power of the working class, so every new member of the Socialist Party tends in the same direction. When the *New York Times* says to the employers, "If you do not make concessions you will soon face even more powerful trade unions"; and when Mr. Roosevelt says to the capitalists, "If you do not pass labor legislation and carry out certain social reforms you will soon face a great political revolt of the workers and ultimately an avalanche of Socialism,"—they are both, in fact, saying the same thing. They are proving beyond all question that the only unfailing method of forcing employers to treat their men fairly is to build up a powerful trade-union movement, and that the only unfailing method of forcing the capitalist parties to pass humane legislation is to build up a powerful political union movement. As soon as the workers realize that only the independent trade union and the independent political party can force the opponents of Labor to come to terms, will they not do all in their power to develop these two organizations of the working class? If every new Trade Unionist and every new Socialist helps to bring better legislation in the interest of Labor, higher wages, and shorter hours, why is not the making of Socialists and Trade Unionists the best, quickest, and most effective way to accomplish all that Labor desires? The argument of the *Times* and of Mr. Roosevelt works both ways. They say that the only way to fight the trade unions and the Socialist Party is to grant extensive social reforms. And, if that be true, then nothing

is more certain than this, that the best way for the workers to get higher wages, shorter hours, and extensive social reforms is to strengthen with all their energy, intellect, and power both the trade unions and the Socialist Party.

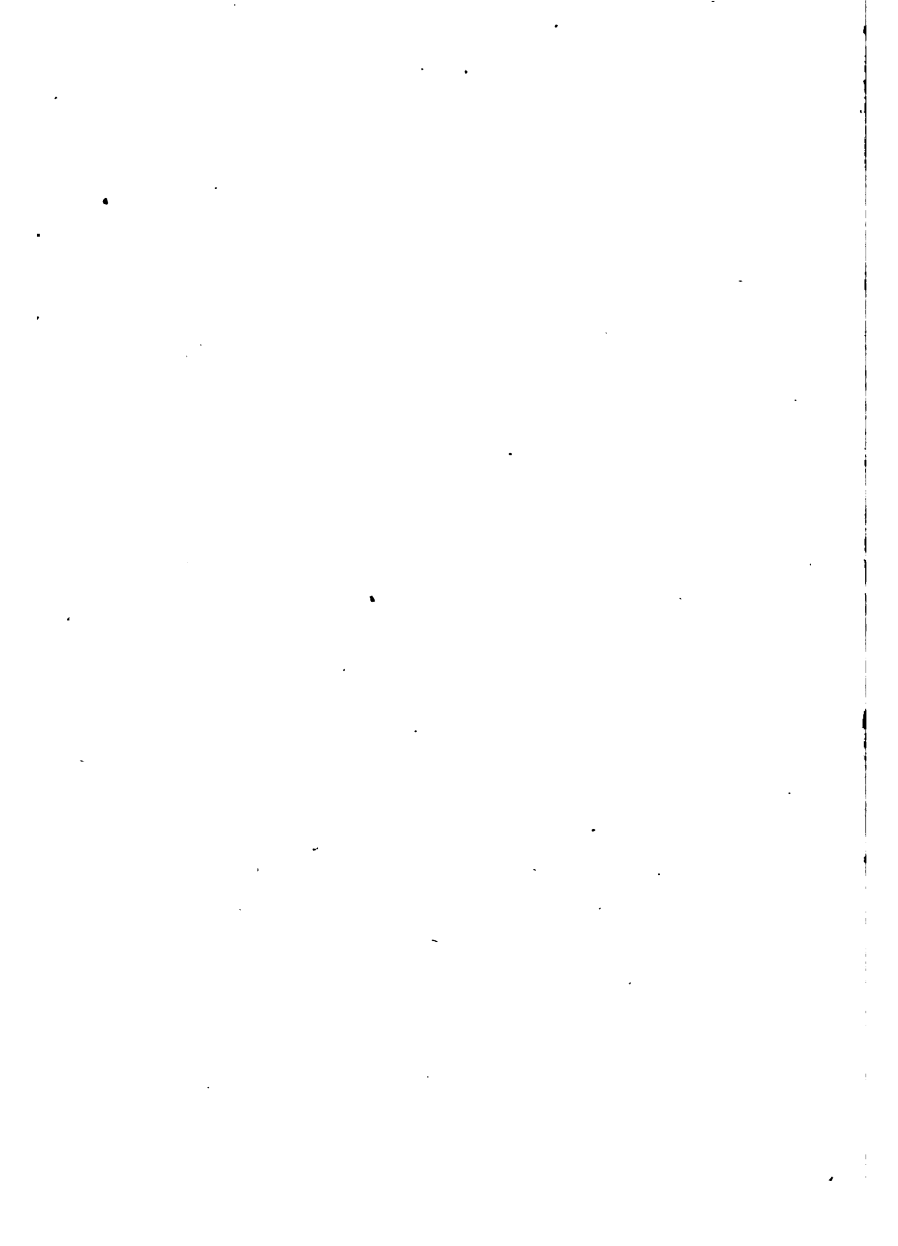
This is not a theory nor is it a fantastic dream. Wherever the trade union is powerful, there wages are high, hours of labor short, and the conditions of work fairly satisfactory to the men. Wherever the Socialist Party is powerful, there great and constructive social reforms are engaging the attention of the governments. Because of the Socialist Party in Germany, that country undertakes vast schemes of social legislation that are greatly improving economic conditions for the masses of the people. If no great social legislation has been passed in America since 1833, is it not, then, because the masses of people have had no independent political machinery of their own for impressing upon the community their needs and desires? This is the key to the social problem in America. The masses are today deluded, deceived, and betrayed by two corrupting and conscienceless political machines, both dominated by the powerful forces of wealth, which seek only laws for their own benefit and privileges that shall add to their power. Labor is led in politics by the very elements that it should be fighting. And it little matters which party is in power, so long as the dominant men in that party are those whose interests are antagonistic to those of the masses and whose plots and conspiracies are intended to rob the many in the interest of the few. These are the reasons why Labor is standing still, why among all the nations of the modern world America is the most backward in remedial measures for the relief of the people. These are the reasons why

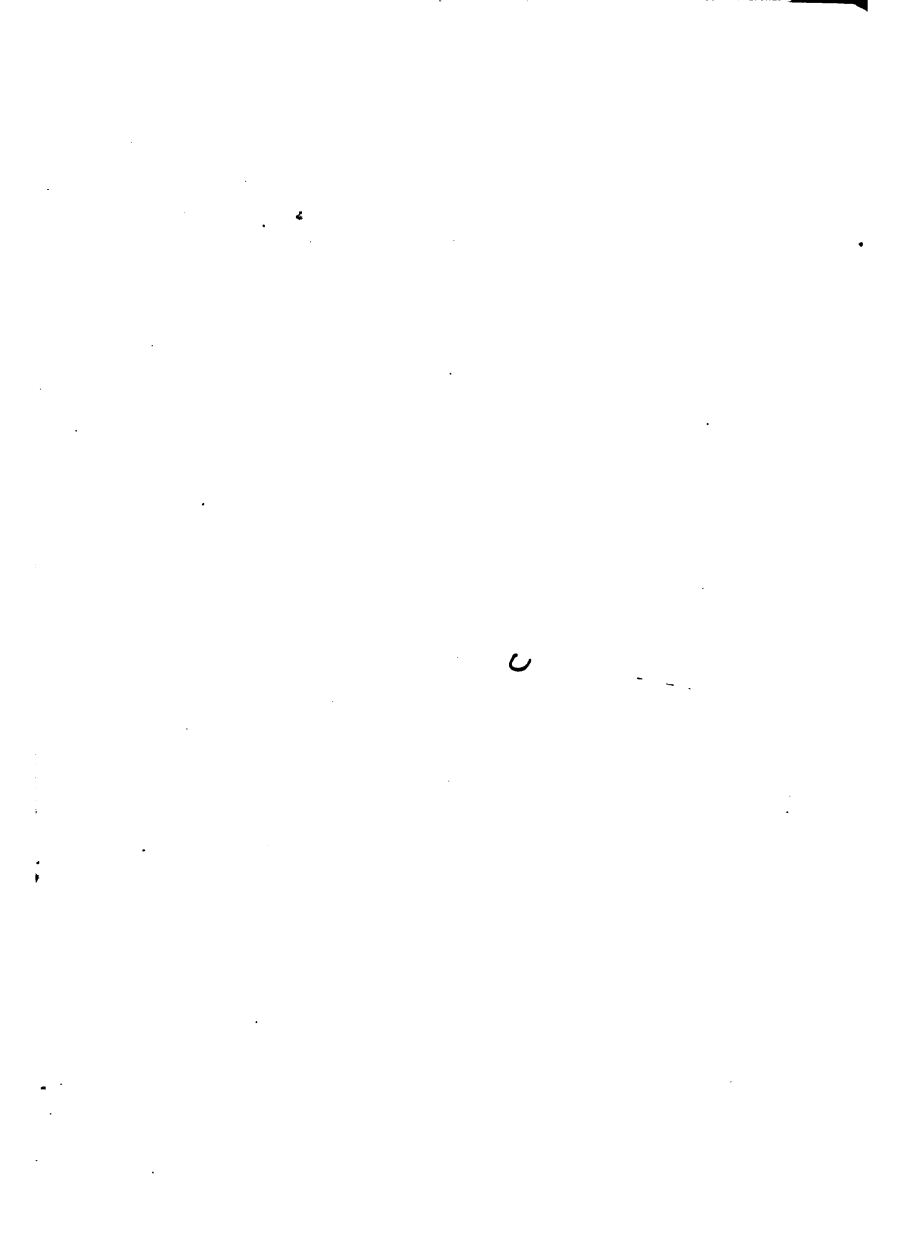
there cannot be, under present conditions, any such thing as the "new freedom" and why the possibility of retaining even the old freedom is doubtful. We are in a period of stagnation, and there is no way to break out of it except through a political organization of Labor that shall give battle to all the varied elements and forces that are now entrenched in power and that fatten upon every kind of class legislation and special privilege.

This volume does not deal with the revolutionary tendencies in our present conflict. It puts aside all consideration of those various indications in modern life that lead many to think that a mighty social revolution is impending. The argument has been confined to this one simple problem: How can Labor force the dominant power to concede to it even the most moderate reforms? How can it obtain even such pathetically limited demands as those made by the A. F. of L. in 1881, some of which are as yet ungranted? It is obvious that until a people has the power to gain reforms, it will not have the power to wage revolutions. If a people cannot get its streets cleaned, its garbage removed, its children out of the sweat shops, or its workers protected from being murdered in the mines, it is not likely to achieve greater things. The American workers are today helpless. They cannot root grafters out of office or drive away pirates who rob them. They have no political power, simply because they have no organization to wield political power. They are led by their enemies. Every political move that they make is dictated by their enemies, and it is little wonder that every election is a means to their destruction. However dismal the outlook in America, there is, nevertheless, some satisfaction in watching the immense growth and de

velopment of democracy in Europe. This great struggle in all European countries, between wealth and privilege on the one side and the great organized forces of Socialism and Trade Unionism on the other, gives us confidence that the turning point in America is not far distant. The immense mass of workers here, numbering over thirty million, will soon see that so long as they are divided, scattered, and warring among themselves they are helpless; that so long as they are led by those whom they should be fighting, they can expect nothing but destruction; but that as soon as they are organized in their own independent unions, both political and industrial, the day of their emancipation is near.







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